

HAPPY HOURS AT **H**OME



ISABEL C. BYRUM



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OUR SAVIOUR

HAPPY HOURS AT HOME
OR, KNOW THYSELF

BY
ISABEL C. BYRUM



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HAPPY HOURS AT HOME OR, KNOW THYSELF

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW BOOK.

“**I** THINK that you had better have a confidential talk with Harry. It seems to me that I have noticed a change in his attitude toward us lately, and I’m sure he needs your encouragement and advice. School-days are very trying times for the lad.”

The speaker was Mr. H. He was advising his wife concerning their fifteen-year-old boy, and his face wore an anxious look. He was one of those fathers who spend many of their spare moments with their children, noting and inquiring into their little trials and difficulties, and joining with them in their sports. In this way he not only was able to point out to them vice and evil, but was often able to teach them the effects of sin upon body and soul.

Harry, their oldest son, had been in high school now for more than a year. He was not easily influenced, and his quiet, thoughtful disposition had helped him many times; but Mr. H. felt that his son was in danger; that he needed encouragement and advice that could best be given by the mother.

“I’m sure that what you say is true,” his wife replied, “but I think the main trouble is that he sees the other boys doing things that his conscience condemns. He hears them boasting of the pleasure that they derive from their amusements, and it fills his heart with a restless longing to enjoy the same things. Then, perhaps he has a feeling that we are too strict.”

“If such is the case, and it probably is, now is the time to encourage him and to keep his confidence,” said Mr. H. “Watch your chance, my dear, and have the talk as soon as it is convenient.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of their two little

daughters, Nellie and Ethel, who had been playing in an adjoining room.

"Where are the boys?" asked Nellie, having noticed that her brothers, Harry and Benny, were not in the room.

"They have gone to a neighbor's to borrow a book to read," her mother answered. "We told them to bring something that you girls could enjoy, and we will take turns in reading it here in our library."

"Oh, how nice that will be!" exclaimed Nellie, who was now in her eleventh year and was very fond of reading. "I wonder," she continued, "what the book will be about. I hope that they will not bring one that we can not read, as they did the last time."

Nellie referred to a book that Harry had brought home a few weeks before, entitled "Gus the Traitor." That book had been examined by the careful mother, and her criticisms were still fresh in the minds of her children. She had explained the great evils produced upon the young mind by the reading of books of such a wild and adventurous nature, and had advised them always to try to select something from which they could derive some good. She had told them that stories were all right if they would lead the mind to higher things and more noble thoughts, but that books which describe evil characters and picture their cruel and vile actions in a manner that place them as heroes in the minds of the reader were harmful and should be avoided. And she had related that some boys and girls of her own acquaintance had become affected by the reading of novels and while trying to imitate the lives of the heroes had branded themselves as thieves and rogues, and that some of them were serving terms in the penitentiary.

"Here they come!" said Ethel, springing up and running into the hall to meet her brothers. Ethel was nearing her ninth birthday and rapidly growing tall, but the boys still looked upon her as their baby sister, and Harry soon held her in his arms.

"Tell me quick what the book is about," she said. "Nellie and I want to know so badly."

But before Harry had time to tell her, she heard Benny explaining to Nellie that it was about giants. Poor Nellie! Great tears of disappointment filled her large brown eyes, and she exclaimed:



"Tell me quick what the book is about."

"O boys! how could you get such a book? Don't you know that there are no such things as giants now?"

"Let Mama see the book, Benny," Harry said with a confident voice. "I'm sure she will like it, for the giants are our faults."

The book proved to be very satisfactory, and two happy hours were spent by the little family that evening. As the book was closed and laid upon the table, Mr. H. remarked:

"Harry, that is a fine book. I admire your choice. It is quite an idea to have our faults pictured up in the form of giants; for that is indeed what they are, and some of them are very large and fierce. Let us, like the brave knight, start forth at once to slay them."

"Were they really giants?" Ethel asked in her sweet way. "Are giants always cross and ugly?"

"Such giants as we are reading about are always cross and ugly, Ethel," her father replied. "Selfishness, Untruth, Hate, and Pride are all giants that trouble us. We can not meet them in our own strength without being injured by them, but there is One who has conquered them all.

"The brave knight that was endeavoring to destroy all these giants is the Christian. He has these things to fight against within himself when he is first saved from sin. But they are sin to him only as he yields to them; but they tempt him often to do wrong, and if he yields he sins.

"I think that my little girl has had some experiences with some of these giants, but by following the example of Jesus you can, like the brave knight, conquer them. What we all need to do is to find out the nature of the giants that are troubling us, and I think that our story will explain that to us soon. But now it is bedtime."

CHAPTER II.

KNOW THYSELF.

“**M**AMA, I don't see why Benny has to be so provoking,” Harry said the following morning when he came in from the barn to prepare for school. “He is getting so conceited, too, that you can't tell him anything any more. It stirs me up so that I can hardly hold myself.”

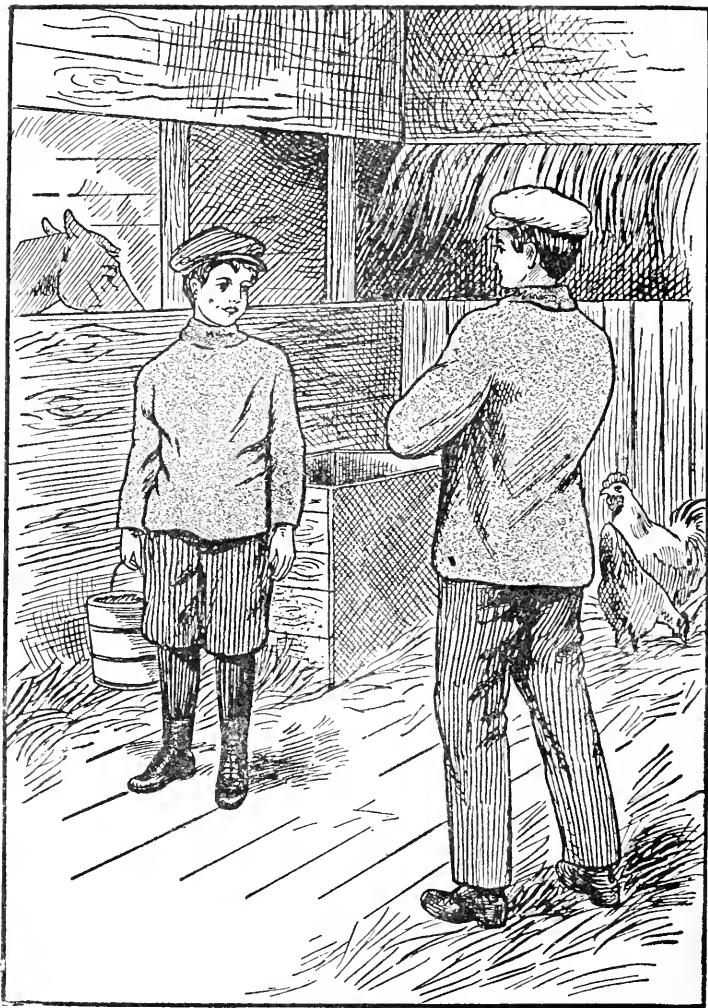
“Beware, my son! Remember what we read last night about the warm spring of anger that flows from the castle of Giant Hate. Beware of those waters, for whoever drinks of them is made powerless to help himself. Remember that at first the person who drinks from this spring is furious, then helpless and feeble—an easy prey for Giant Hate. Remember that bitter words are the arrows used by this fierce giant, and that although they sting and wound they do not kill. Remember, too, the warning that Conscience gives at the very edge of the spring. Heed her words and listen to her sweet counsel, and, above all, keep from tasting the fatal water.

“Poor Benny! Don't judge him too harshly! Remember how you were at the age of thirteen. He is just at the conceited age, and he needs encouragement and kindness. Help him, Harry! Take his funny little remarks as he really means them. He will soon be very different.”

“What do you mean by Benny's being conceited, Mama? I believe that's just it! Was I ever like that?” Harry asked these questions excitedly, and before his mother replied he continued: “I ought to be ashamed for letting his silly words affect me so! I can see now that I was something like Benny when I was his age. Why didn't I see it before?”

“Harry, it is hard to see our faults when we are in a trial. It is hard to see them, too, when our minds are not developed. So, dear, do bear with Benny. We can not know too much about ourselves and our weaknesses. It is this knowledge that helps us to resist temptation. I believe the book that you brought home last evening is going to be of real value to each of us, so let us try to apply it to ourselves as we read it.”

“Well, I'm glad we have had this talk, and I wish we could have another,”



Harry said as he took up his cap and left the room. The door was scarcely closed, when it was reopened by Benny and closed with a slam. It was, however, not closed in anger. No, indeed! Benny was far from being angry. His face was lighted up with smiles, and the merry twinkle of his eye and the tune that he was whistling told of the sport that he had been having with his older brother a short time before. Benny was a noble boy, generous, kind-hearted, and ambitious; but he enjoyed fun and took delight in teasing his older brother.

As Benny was making hasty preparations to leave for school, his mother went to him with an earnest prayer in her heart.

"Benny," she said in a low tone, "wait just a minute before you go."

"Oh, don't make me stop!" he said impatiently. "I ought to be started now."

"You must stop long enough, my child, to have a word of prayer with me," his mother said earnestly. "It is necessary this morning!"

"Well I don't see why it is necessary," he answered impatiently. "I didn't hurt Harry, and I was only in fun. It seems he can't take a joke."

"Benny, I have just had a talk with Harry," Mrs. H. replied, "and he doesn't understand himself or you either. He has an idea that you do these little funny things that annoy him so, just to provoke and tease him. He thinks you are getting worse; but when I explained to him the cause and begged him to help you, he saw things differently."

"What do you mean by the cause?" Benny asked quickly. "I don't mean anything, and Harry knows it!"

"Yes, and I know it, too, my son. But we can not take time for explanations this morning. Let us pray, and some time soon we shall have a little talk."

The prayer was short; but as they arose Mrs. H. thought she saw a different expression on her son's face. That day as she worked, her heart was crying to God for wisdom to know just how to advise her two sons, who were so rapidly developing into manhood. It was such an important time, and one so often neglected by parents. God alone could help her, and upon him she depended.

CHAPTER III.

CHARACTER-BUILDING.

IT WAS only three o'clock in the afternoon, but Harry had returned from school. On account of a lecture given to the pupils the room had been dismissed earlier than common, and he had hastened home to his mother for the promised talk. Mrs. H. was not expecting him so soon, but her work being of such a nature that it could be easily laid aside, she put it away and bade Harry come and sit close beside her.

As the mother looked into the eager, expectant face before her, she felt her heart throb with pleasure, for she read her son's confidence and trust. And she read something else—the boyish expression was fast changing to that of manhood, and her child's mind beginning to grasp the weightier things of life. As in the morning, an earnest silent prayer ascended from her soul.

"Harry," she began slowly, "have you ever thought of how little we know about the future, how little we know of what may happen to change our whole course in life? Have you ever thought of what it means to have a purpose in life? You need not answer me, for I'm sure these thoughts have come to you in some form, and, dear, it is right that you do consider them.

"It is true that we can not know just what things are to befall us, but there is one thing that we can do, yes, that we are doing daily. We are building up within ourselves a character—either one that will lead us upward or one that will lead us downward. We can become either an honor or a disgrace to humanity, and we can be either a blessing or a curse to ourselves. We can choose which we shall be. It is in our power—even though circumstances may seem to be against us—to be as God intended us to be—pure, noble, and good.

"God made mankind able to choose between right and wrong, and since they have eaten of the tree of knowledge, they have power to know what is right and what is wrong. Of course, Satan is just as strong to deceive today as he was in the beginning, and sin has existed so long that there are many more things to shun, and temptation is stronger; but God wants us to be pure in heart and to shun evil.

"And now, Harry, many do wrong and are led into sin because *they do*



"I have wanted to ask you something for a long time."

not understand until it is too late that they are doing anything wrong. For this reason God has given parents the command to teach their children the right way while they are young, and that is why your father and I have endeavored to tell you the things that you should know. I feel that the time has come when you need to know more. Am I right?"

For a moment there was silence; then Harry's honest eyes looked straight into his mother's, and he said:

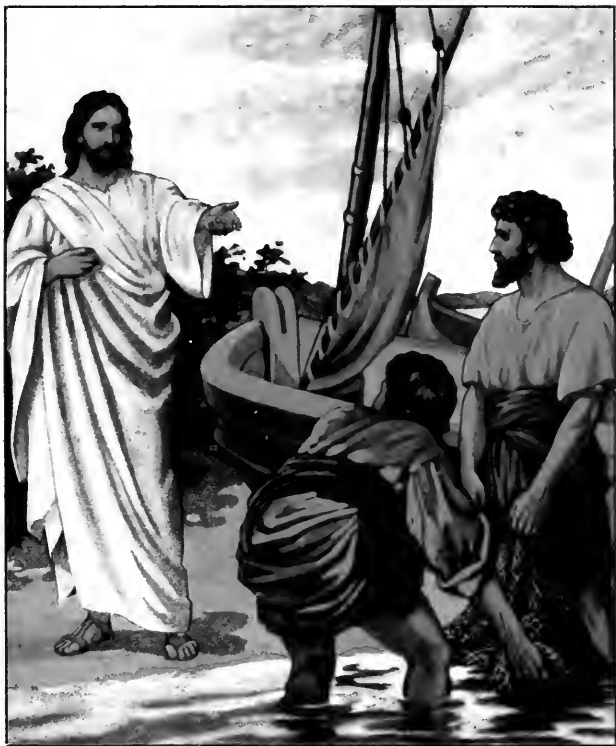
"I have wanted to ask you something for a long time. I have wondered why you are so particular about our going out in the evening. Other boys go, and why is it wrong for us?"

"I have been afraid that you would think that we were too particular with you my son, but, O Harry! you do not know how many snares Satan has prepared to entrap young boys and girls. There is a saying that 'Satan finds mischief for idle hands to do,' and it is very true. Satan is never asleep. He is ever ready to get some innocent soul into trouble; and the dark hours of the night, when the duties of the day are over, are the best to serve his purpose. Boys and girls leave their homes in the evening with only good purposes, but sooner or later they will meet temptation.

"The cigar and the wine-cup, stealing and lying, may be no temptation at first; but if you will note the boys and girls who are allowed the privilege of choosing their own company and spending their evenings away from home, you will soon see a great change in them. You will find them growing dull in their studies because of the lack of sleep. Then they will become less ambitious and prompt about their regular duties, and they will shrink from confiding in their parents. They may be inclined to deceive, to hide their plans, to have friends whom they will not bring to their homes, and to do various other things that lead downward. Sooner or later they will yield to temptation and go into sin.

"There are, it is true, many places where young people can go with safety, but they should always remember that Satan is lurking around the door of the best places, even where you least expect him. You are safe only as you confide in your father, mother, or some one else who has your interest at heart.

"You know, Harry, that the Bible calls you a son of God. I wonder if



CHRIST CALLING HIS DISCIPLES



you understand what that means? No birth can be more noble! You are an heir to God's throne in heaven and are made in the very image of God! Every possibility in life is before you. You have bright hopes, but your plans for the future to become a respectable, honest citizen and to have some day a pleasant home and a dear little family of your own to share it with you will not be realized unless you begin now to lay the foundation of your character.

"You can not associate with rough, wicked people and not feel a bad influence thrown over you. For a time their actions may be repulsive to you, but you will gradually discover that you too can do the same things. Then you will lose interest in things that are elevating and refining, and you will feel out of place when in the company of those who endeavor to live a good and righteous life.

"The kind of literature that you read will have its effect upon you. If you choose only that which is good, your voice, manner, and even your features will be affected for the better by it, and your language will be improved. Reading beautiful and exalted ideas of great writers will create within you a desire to have the same qualities in your own character and life.

"So, my son, when choosing either friends or books, make it a point to question whether you would like to imitate them in your future life, for you are certain to feel their influence sooner or later, and remember that character is built of those daily happenings in your life that you enjoy and enter into willingly.

"Another thing that God intended was that you should enter manhood with as strong and healthy a body as it is possible for you to possess, for the sake of your family and children and happiness in your home. Young men who spend their time in sin, sowing wild oats, as it is said, can expect to reap some day a harvest of things that will not be at all pleasant.

"You are at that age now, Harry, when you must begin to choose your course in life. Soon you will cease to come to father and mother for advice, and oh, my son! what if you had been in the habit of turning a deaf ear to their words of counsel? What if you had spent long evenings on the street-corners, in saloons, or evil dens? If such were the case, would you then be able to choose your course in life? No, Harry; the way to avoid evil is to

shun it from the beginning, to have something to occupy your time, and to indulge in only such things as your parents and your conscience approve.

"There lies in you, son, divine power to enable you to become a noble man and to be worthy of your heavenly inheritance. There will be many obstacles in your way; but when you are safely over them, you can look back and smile at the things that at one time seemed so great. You have talents. Study to know what they are and improve them. Strive to make the world better for your being in it. With this purpose in view you can not help being all that God intended you to be.

"There is within every one a nature that craves the good and pure, but there is also something within that inclines one to do evil. One's character depends upon which part one feeds and strengthens. And, Harry, I trust that you, like the beautiful character that we read of in the Bible, will choose that better part."

"What you have said has certainly encouraged me, Mama," Harry said when his mother ceased speaking, and deep in his honest eyes there was a look of decision that meant more to her than words could ever express, and she added: "Harry, you are going to be a good man if you continue to choose the right way and strive to build up a perfect character. Perhaps we will be able to glean some good thoughts from our new book this evening. But here come the children, and I must get busy."

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FAULTS.

THE story that evening was particularly interesting. The brave knight that was passing through the land of the giants had been provided by the king with a strong armor and a wonderful sword. Also, he had been given a sincere friend, whose name was Conscience, to go with him everywhere he went. He was sure of certain victories if he did not shrink back nor prove himself a traitor. He had nothing to fear but his own slackness in the fight. If faithful, he was to receive a great reward.

The enemy attacked that evening was giant Selfishness, who was both huge and powerful. He was tyrant over half the world. Many a great conqueror he had made his slave, and thousands upon thousands he had bound with his chains. He claimed dominion over young and old alike. Still he was afraid of the brave knight with his wonderful sword. Indeed, he feared nothing on earth so much as that sword, for he knew that some of his strongest brethren had been slain by it. And he knew that the knight could use it skillfully.

As soon as giant Selfishness heard that the knight was arrayed for battle, he became very uneasy. He called his servant Pleasure to his assistance and gave orders to the fairy-like creature to help him in the conflict. "Hasten to your castle and there prepare a feast of the daintiest food that you are able," he said. "Load your table with all that is tempting that you know how to make, and as you dance before the knight urge him to eat of the food." With all haste she departed.

As the knight was approaching the glittering castle, he did not remember that it was where the servant of his enemy dwelt. He was therefore ill-prepared to resist the kind invitation to partake of the dainty food that she had ready for him. The giant's repulsiveness and power had been the burden of his thoughts, and the sight of the loaded table threw him off his guard completely. True, he heard the warning voice of Conscience, but that of Temptation was louder, and so his lower nature overcame the better.

Not until the day was gone and night had settled over the land, did he



realize where he was, and even then he did not consider his danger. Arising from the table, he accepted Pleasure's offer to guide him to the giant's castle, and was soon on his way through a dense forest.

The light of the lantern was hard to follow, as Pleasure flitted here and there. On account of not being on his guard, the unsuspecting knight suddenly stumbled and fell into a deep pit that the giant had prepared for him.

Although the pit was deep, the fall did not kill him. Perhaps it was the wonderful armor the knight wore that protected him from severe injury. Although he was not badly hurt, he was bruised, perplexed, and discouraged. Never in his life had he been so ashamed of himself for his carelessness and heedlessness. In an instant he was upon his feet and in the dim light feeling about for a way of escape. He would not remain in prison if there was any possible way out.

He tried many times to climb up the sides of the pit, but each time the soil was either too moist or too loose to support his feet, and soon he would find himself again at the bottom panting and disheartened.

It was after a failure of this sort that Conscience said to him: "Thou must climb! He who perseveres must be successful at length." Then she directed him to the strong cord of Love that was suspended from the top of the pit. As it hung just above his head, he had to climb to reach it; but as his former attempts made it easier for him to climb, he soon grasped the golden thread.

As he drew himself upward, he heard the giant uttering cries of dismay. Selfishness, though such a monster, was a great coward; and as soon as he saw the knight safely outside the pit, he started to run away, but he was slain in the very act of flight.

It was a grand victory, and as the knight viewed the huge form before him, he was very happy. While he was still rejoicing in the fact that the giant was slain, he saw, caught in a thicket, the beautiful form of Pleasure.

"Must I slay her too?" he said to Conscience, "for I now remember that she was a servant of giant Selfishness."

"No, let Pleasure live," Conscience replied. "Her master is dead, and she can now be your servant as she was his. But she must learn to perform



higher, nobler tasks than any to which she was accustomed under giant Selfishness. We will place her under the care of Benevolence, so that all her better nature will be drawn out. Pleasure will then become a holy thing—her office no longer to lead thee astray, but to follow in thy footsteps in the path of duty and to remain thy companion forever.”

“What a fine description of our greatest fault!” exclaimed Mrs. H. as Benny, who had been reading, closed the book for the night. “Surely the author knew something of the way giant Selfishness is in the habit of acting.”

“I think it was very nice that the knight let Pleasure live,” Ethel said with a sigh of relief. “I wonder how she served the knight.”

“I think she found many ways to make him happy,” replied Mrs. H., for it was far easier to please him than it had been to please her former master. Selfishness is indeed a cruel master. He makes every one miserable who tries to follow his instructions. A thoroughly selfish person is more mean and overbearing than any one else can be. He thinks only of his own happiness and comfort, and in trying to provide for that he makes those around him unhappy and miserable. He finds fault with others and blames all but himself when things go wrong. He is envious when he hears another praised, and at such times his own actions are often a ridicule to himself. Let us examine ourselves and with God’s help get rid of selfishness, for it robs us of our heavenly blessings.

“Ofttimes the very thing that we consider a mark of our unselfishness becomes to us a giant to control. Perhaps we love our friends so much that we can not bear to be out of their sight or to see them in the company of any one else. Or perhaps we wish others to love our friends and blame them severely when they do not. Then we may be very liberal, but expect to receive as much or even more in return. Now, such is selfishness just as much as though we insisted upon having pleasures heaped upon ourselves. O my children, do beware of the awful pits of selfishness that are ever open for the unsuspecting man, woman, or child. Any one is liable to fall into them if he indulges in the feasts prepared by giant Selfishness.”

When the other members of the family left the room to prepare for bed, Benny lingered behind with his mother. With his head bent low he said:

"Mama, I'm sorry for the way I treated Harry this morning. I wish you would forgive me. I know I didn't act right."

A loving hand was laid upon Benny's head, and when he looked up into his mother's face, he saw a smile and heard the words:

"I too am sorry, my son. I am sorry because you yielded to temptation and teased your brother as you did; but I am very glad that you see your error and are brave enough to take the right way out."

"Benny," his mother went on to say, "it isn't always the soldier who pushes his way first to the front, boasting of his power, who is truly brave. I remember how my cousin acted when he received his toy gun. He had heard of some who were causing much disturbance among the people of his neighborhood, and as his grandmother and mother were mentioning some of their riotings, he at once stood erect and, holding his gun in a threatening attitude, said, 'Let them dare to come here, and I will fix them.'"

"My uncle and a friend in an adjoining room heard the remark and, hastily disguising themselves with old clothes and blackened faces, slipped stealthily outside and approached the house as the rioters would have done. They were anxious to see whether the lad was really brave. As the gate clicked, my cousin said in a terrified voice, 'Grandmother, who is that?' Understanding my uncle's intentions, she said, 'Why, it may be the rioters?'"

"My cousin waited for no more. With one bound he disappeared with his gun through the cellar door, and an hour later it was with the greatest difficulty that he was persuaded to leave his retreat behind the potato-barrels. Now, he had thought that he was brave and that he would be able to meet a great enemy, but in the hour of need his courage failed him. He fled even when there was no foe.

"Benny, many of us make good resolutions. We decide that we will not yield to temptation. We see that we have done wrong and think that another time we shall act differently. These thoughts are good and brave in themselves, but true bravery is shown when we meet the temptation and are brave enough to overcome it as the knight does in our story-book.

"You will again be tempted to tease your brother. Then is when you should be brave and strong. Harry's disposition is very different from yours.

It is hard, as you say, for him to take your funny remarks all in the way you mean them. He loves you and wants to be kind, but you know it is hard to be teased. Many times your remarks are far more cutting than you mean them to be. It makes Harry feel almost revengeful. Sometimes he feels that he would just like to get even with you. If he yields and gives you a blow, do you know what you have done? You not only have introduced fighting into our home (for you certainly would pay him back), but have laid a foundation for many other evil acts.

"It is the small beginnings, Benny, that make the sad endings. The temper is like a fire. It is something that must be kept under control or it will become a terror to humanity. The temper uncontrolled has wrecked many a life. You think that Harry can not take things in fun. It is nearly as hard for you to do so.

"Then, too, we have to be careful and think of the hidden meaning of every act. Childhood is the period when impressions both good and bad are indelibly stamped upon the sensitive brain. It is then as easy to form a right habit as a wrong one; so let us strive, Benny, to have only right habits formed in our home.

"I well remember two boys just about the age of you and Harry who brought much sorrow to the hearts of their parents by forming some bad habits in their youth. These boys were from good families. Their parents had many bright hopes for their future, but through carelessness and neglect they saw their hopes dashed to pieces and their boys ruined.

"At the age of eleven and thirteen the boys' downward course began. Playing truant from school, deceiving their parents and teacher, and other things of that nature was the beginning. On one occasion when they were supposed to be in school they were in a lonely deserted street learning how to smoke. When they returned in the evening they were sick and unable to eat any supper, and on this account some of their wrong-doings were discovered, but they were only scolded and ordered to do better in the future.

"Nothing was said to those dear boys about the danger that they were in nor about how they were injuring their own bodies and characters. Their associates were not inquired about, and the boys were allowed to go on and on

choosing their own company. It was not long until these boys could lie, steal, visit saloons, and even come home intoxicated. For a time they endeavored to hide all these things from their parents, but at length they became so enslaved to bad habits that they lost their self-respect, and then their parents awoke to the fact that their sons were considered by others about the roughest in the neighborhood and that it was too late to turn them from their evil ways.

"Time and again those heart-broken mothers pleaded with their sons to do better, but the boys only mocked and resisted their efforts to help them.

"On one occasion when the youngest boy was still in his teens, he came home from a gambling-den and ordered his mother to get him some money as quickly as possible. Seeing that he had been drinking, she said, "No, my son; I can not give you any now." Her refusal made him so angry that he seized a tubfull of white clothes that she had just washed and was preparing to hang upon the line, and emptied them into the coal-bin.

"The other boy did even worse than this one; for when he could not get the money that he desired, he would threaten to kill or would steal it, and nothing was safe that he could pawn for money.

"You shudder, Benny, and wonder how these boys could have turned out so bad. You must remember that human nature is the same the world over. Those dear boys were once as pure and innocent as you and your brother are today. The same danger awaits every one, and it is against these dangers that I want to warn and guard you."

The two continued to talk in the library for a long time, and many different subjects were touched upon, and some were not faults. Mrs. H. had been longing for an opportunity for just such a talk with her son, and had earnestly prayed that God would give her the needed wisdom when the right time came. She did not believe in forcing such interviews upon her children, but just waited until time and circumstances were both in her favor.

Benny was at the age when so many boys are misunderstood. His innocent childish nature was maturing, and his own individuality was presenting itself. Unconsciously he was reaching out to know more about himself. He was not of a confiding nature like his brother, and it was necessary to draw him out. Who could do it more simply and beautifully than his mother? Who

could unfold the mysterious things pertaining to life as well as she? It was thus that Mrs. H. often reasoned with herself, and now as she carefully questioned her son, she drew forth an acknowledgement of the things that were grieving and perplexing his young mind.

Among other things, she told him how to safely cross the dangerous strait between boyhood and manhood, and explained why so many boys were wrecked at this important period of their lives. Alluding to the morning's talk, she said:

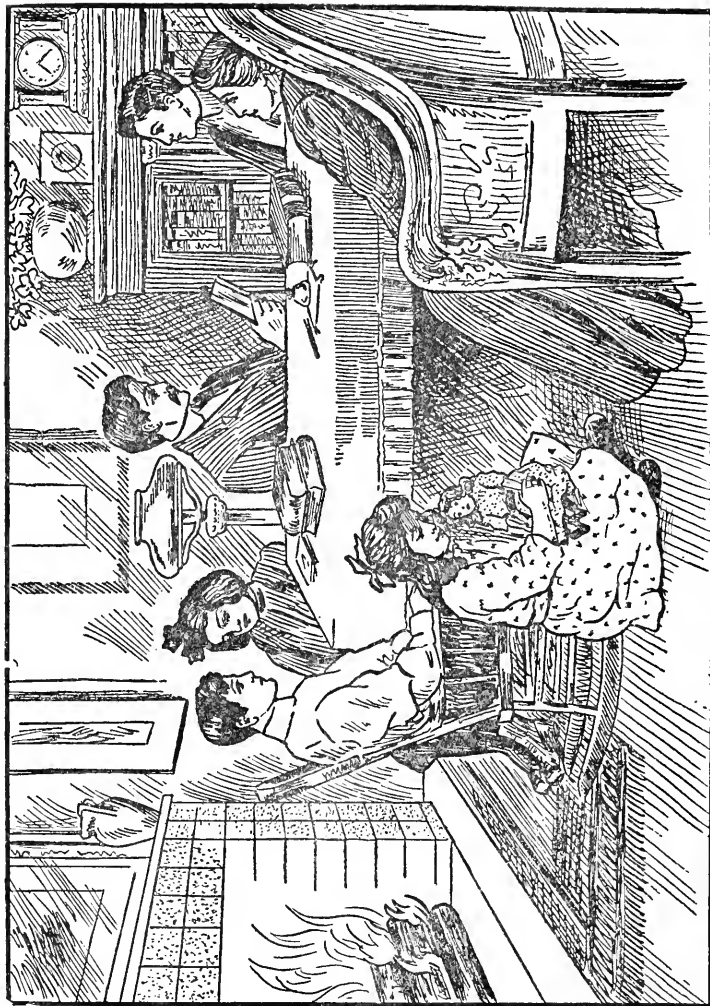
"Benny, I told you there was a cause for your actions that have lately made the trouble between you and your brother. It is this change that is taking place in your nature. We are strangely and wonderfully created. God has given us each an individuality that makes each of us different from everybody else. No one could be just like anybody else in the world if he should try ever so hard, and yet we can change many of our habits so that we shall not be an annoyance to any of our friends.

"You can not only keep your own life pure and good and pleasant, but you can do much by your actions to help your brother and sisters to be kind and noble. They need your help, Benny, to keep them from stumbling or straying from the right and true way. Your little sisters are coming right along the path that you are treading. There will be just as great a change in their natures as there will be in your own. They will not understand until Mama, little by little, informs them; but if you will by your example show them what a noble character you intend to be, you not only will help them and yourself, but will be a real inspiration to others and to me."

Benny looked very thoughtful as his mother ceased speaking, and after a moment's silence he said:

"Say, I know a boy that needs to have his mother talk to him just as you have talked to me. I saw him this morning smoking an old pipe, and the boys say that he drinks and swears. I know his mother doesn't talk to him and get near to him as you do to us. It just does a fellow good to know these things. I wish you would tell me more."

"Well, I will some other time, but I think we have talked enough for this time. We must hurry off to bed, or somebody will be sleepy in the morning."



"Gathered in the comfortable library and read."

CHAPTER V.
GIANT UNTRUTH.

SOMETIMES several days passed between the evenings when the family could all be together, but the reading was taken up again at the first opportunity. Occasionally a friend came in to spend a few hours, and often the children had lessons to prepare for the following day that took more time than others, or the father had business away from home, and sometimes there was a piece of work that had to be done; but whenever it was possible to do so, they gathered in the comfortable library and read. It was so cheery there before the open grate, for they were nearing the holiday season and the nights were cold.

The descriptions of the giants were very helpful, and the conflicts of the knight were so true to life that his bravery was a topic for much talk and comment among the children. When giant Untruth came to the front, Mrs. H. thought of her good opportunity to get some important lessons to her children, and she tried to remember all the good points that she possibly could.

Giant Untruth was a sly old fellow. In fact, he was one of the knight's most dangerous foes because of the strange enchantments that he used. Though a giant, he could shrink to the size of the tiniest dwarf and so remain concealed and unnoticed until his pursuer passed by, when he would suddenly resume his own form and strike at his foe from behind.

The knight realized that a hard task was before him. To find an enemy who had such a way of disappearing from view would be hard indeed. He did not feel himself able to undertake to discover the giant in his secret haunts until conscience explained to him a secret by which it was possible to locate him even though he was hidden. Before every suspected place the wonderful sword was to be raised, and if Untruth did not lurk there, no change would be seen, but if the shadow of the blade fell near the false one, a dark shade would appear upon the object that concealed him. Then was the time to strike boldly, and Untruth would have to fall. After a few more words of counsel and instruction from his friend the knight again went forth into the land of the giants.

Seen from a distance, the castle of Untruth appeared like a lordly palace; on near approach it was more like a poorhouse. What seemed marble proved to be only painted lath, and everything else was in accordance—deceptive and false. The very bolts on the doors gave way to the first stroke of the sword. Inside the palace things were still worse. No brilliant sunbeams ever found their way into that place. Water trickled down from the green, unwholesome walls, and the trail of the serpent was upon the floor. A yellow glare from sickly torches dazzled the eyes of the stranger. In every way it was a miserable abode.

A long crooked gallery called Fear occupied a great part of the dwelling. In this gallery many victims lost their way and groped about at the mercy of Untruth, whose abode was just beyond.

When the knight caught sight of the giant, he thought that he had never before beheld anything so hideous. Cruelty, cowardice, and cunning were stamped upon his brow. He looked like one who would shrink from the light. For a moment the knight stood looking at the giant, and then as if by magic Untruth vanished from his eyes, and the knight seemed to be left alone to search the artful foe.

There were many strange objects in that hall, not one of which on close examination looked the same as it did from a distance. Treasures of various sorts, as gems, and jewels, were all found to be imitations made to deceive. In one corner a huge mask attracted the knight's attention. The features were smiling and pleasant, and the complexion was a beautiful white; but the knight fancied that underneath the eye-holes he saw something moving. He at once approached the mask with his wonderful sword. As he drew near and the shadows fell on the false face, a dull stain appeared on the whiteness of its brow. Down came the sword, rending the mask from top to bottom; but the giant escaped with only a wound.

This success, however, gave the knight more courage, and with rapid step he moved from place to place, examining this, glancing under that, keeping sharp watch, like the good champion that he was. Now a heap of dresses thrown loosely together in a corner excited his suspicion. Amongst them was a cloak of white fur, lined with black, which the knight thought might

conceal the enemy. The test of the sword was applied, and darkness gathered on the whiteness of the fur, its hue becoming like that of the lining within. Again the enemy fled, wounded by a stroke from the knight's sword.

The knight continued the search until he grew weary, but at last he located the cunning enchanter behind a huge magnifying mirror and slew him.

"I'm so glad he was killed," said Nellie as the reading ended. "I know the story is a picture of Untruth, but I don't understand it."

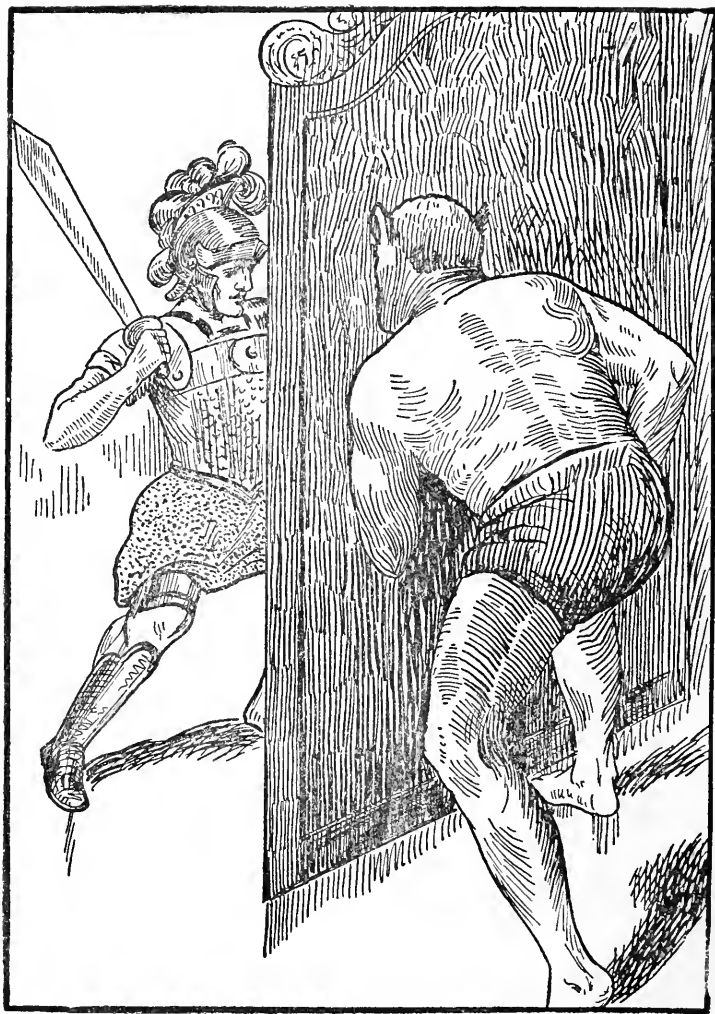
"Untruth is not your fault, my daughter, and that is one reason why you do not understand the story. The true meaning is clear to those who have had experiences with him. Nearly all who decide to live a Christian life have to conquer this fault in some form or other. The fault is so mean and miserable that it is hard for anyone to acknowledge it even to himself. The gallery of Fear is so crooked and deceiving that escape from it is very difficult.

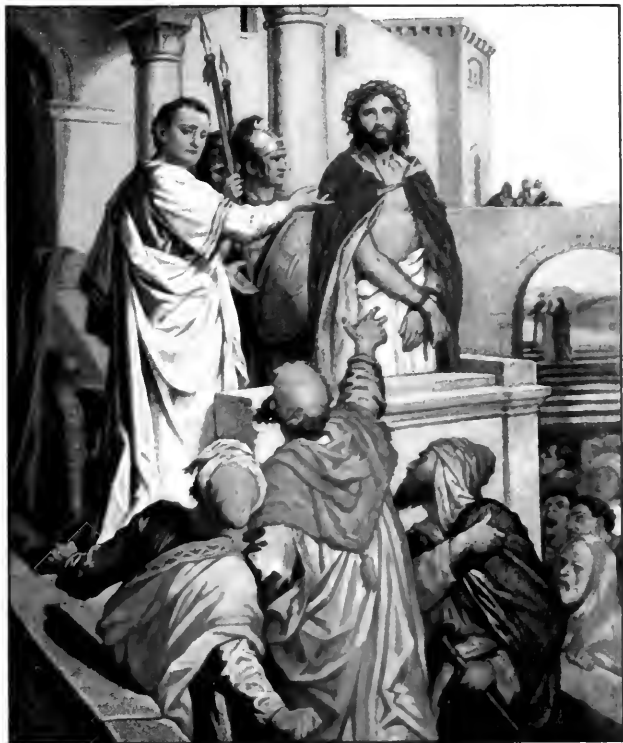
"The handsome mask behind which the giant was hidden was hypocrisy. Any one who tries to act or appear what he is not is a hypocrite, and his actions are intended to deceive and cover up his wrong-doings.

"I well remember a little neighbor girl whom I saw passing through my father's peach-orchard. I had heard some stories at school about her stealing, but she had always seemed so nice around me that I could not believe them. Still when she disappeared from sight, I thought of a certain tree upon which I had noticed some nice peaches a short time before, and I hurried out to it.

"There was the girl directly under a branch from which some peaches hung. She was so intent upon what she was doing that she did not see me. She had slipped six peaches under the bib of her apron before she discovered that any one was around. As she was reaching for the seventh, she saw me. Quickly raising the peach to her mouth, she began eating it and with her arms tried to shield her apron and acted as though the one was all that she had taken. In answer to my surprised look, she said, 'My! but this peach is fine,' and then began talking about other things.

"I was only a child, but I knew that she had done wrong, and I longed to hear her confession, but she made none. She did not know that I could see the form of the peaches beneath their thin covering, and she went home thinking her sin was covered up by the mask of hypocrisy.





JESUS BEFORE PILATE



"As that poor girl grew to womanhood, the character she had cultivated in childhood grew rapidly, and her word was valueless with all who knew her.

"But that is only one way of acting the hypocrite. Any one who tries to make it appear that he is what in his heart he knows that he is not, is a hypocrite. When such persons come in contact with a true Christian, they can expect to have their mask torn away by the sword of the Lord—the Bible.

"I remember another case of hypocrisy. When I was still quite young, a neighbor asked me to do a certain piece of work for him and promised to give me thirty cents if I did my work well. I shall never forget how hard I worked that day in the hot sun, and when I had finished, my work was well done. Of course, I expected the money and thought every time I met the man that he would offer to pay me. Thirty cents seemed a large sum of money to me then, and I wanted it very much; so after I had waited a proper length of time, my mother said I might go and ask for my wages.

"When I made my errand known, the man smiled and said, 'All right, come another time, and I'll have it for you.' Well, I went for the money the third time and was always put off in the same manner. The truth was, he did not intend to pay me the money, and he used that way to get out of doing it. Later he asked me to help him again, but I refused to go.

"Now, that man was Untruth hiding in a cloke of white fur. He tried to make me think that he meant to do the right thing, but his heart was black, and he meant to deceive.

"I once heard of a boy who was looking for work. A man offered to help him by speaking a good word for him to his own employer and promised, if the lad would call at a certain time, to let him know if there was any prospect. At the appointed time the boy came, but the man had forgotten to mention the matter, but again he promised to do so if the boy would call that evening. The boy came the second time, and again the man told him that he had forgotten to keep his word and set another time for the boy to come to his home. That was enough. The lad came no more. He had lost confidence in the man.

"Now, Nellie, what do you think of these two men? Were they each acting an untruth?"

"Let me answer for her," said Mr. H., noticing that Nellie hesitated.

"It seems to me that the act was much the same, but the two had different motives. One desired to get out of doing his duty, while the other was careless and neglected doing it. One's intentions were bad, while the other's were good; but in each instance the child lost confidence in the man.

"We should always consider before making a promise whether or not we shall be able to keep it. If we should happen to make one that it is impossible to fulfil, we ought at our earliest opportunity to inform the person concerned and explain why we are unable to keep our word. So many grow careless and do not value their word as they should. Beware of such persons; for they will ere long creep behind the false mask of hypocrisy or try to hide in the folds of the cloke of equivocation and speak in an uncertain way, as the man did about paying your mother.

"Untruth's last resort, behind the magnifying mirror, represents speaking the truth, but magnifying or enlarging upon it until it is hard to know whether the speaker is telling the truth or not. How often the boy who is throwing or shooting at a target hears the remark, 'You didn't come within a mile of it!' when he really came very close to it! You can see that such expressions would give his words an uncertain meaning, and in time it would be hard to have much confidence in him even though he should really speak the truth and tell things just as they were. Study to speak so that your words express what you mean and can be depended upon.

"Truthfulness is the corner-stone of character. When properly placed in the foundation of the child-life, there need be no fear of its crumbling or falling away from the other stones. Its strength and power is reckoned by the way in which it is laid.

"The different giants of whom we have been reading were not large at first. They had to be nourished and cared for to become so powerful. Our faults are just the disagreeable elements in our nature. As weeds, they are of more rapid growth than the delicate, tender plants of our better qualities and are inclined to check these. For this reason every child should be told early in life, before their faults have time to mature and become strongly rooted, of their human nature and instructed how to care for the better things within them."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAITHFUL SPIES' REWARD.

“**S**HOULD you like to hear a giant story from the Bible?” Mrs. H. asked the next time the family were all together in the library. “If you would, I think I know one that would be interesting.”

The children all answered, “Yes,” so she began:

“Ever so long ago a great company of people were marching to a country of which they had heard many reports but which they had never seen. Some of the reports had been good, while others had been bad, and they were longing to know for certain. Their fathers had told them what they knew and had heard, but their fathers had received their information from their ancestors, so that the whole wonderful story had become like a legend.

“The story that had been handed down from generation to generation was that an old man and his wife had been given a territory for a possession. It was to be a home to them while they lived and needed it, and after their death it was to become the inheritance of their children. Many things had happened since the death of the aged couple. Their descendants were in another country, and other people were living in the land that was theirs by inheritance. It was still theirs by right, and they were on their way to possess it and to drive out the strangers within the borders.

“As they journeyed along, they saw many of their number fall by the way-side and were obliged to bury their loved ones in the hot, sandy desert without a hope of ever being able to visit the lonely graves. Sometimes when the food was scant and the hardships were many, some complained and wished that they had remained in the country that they had left behind. At such times their earnest, patient leader went among them to encourage and advise.

“At last they were nearing their destination—the country of which they had so often heard and dreamed—and they were curious to know what kind of people lived there. And they longed for the good things to eat awaiting them there, for had they not been told over and over that the land fairly flowed with milk and honey. But there might be just such men in it as the one whom they had recently slain—a man whose bed measured more than thirteen feet

in length and was made of iron. It meant something to meet giants like that! Surely it would be best to know what kind of people were over there. But who would go to spy out the land before they entered it? The question was asked by those ancient people again and again.

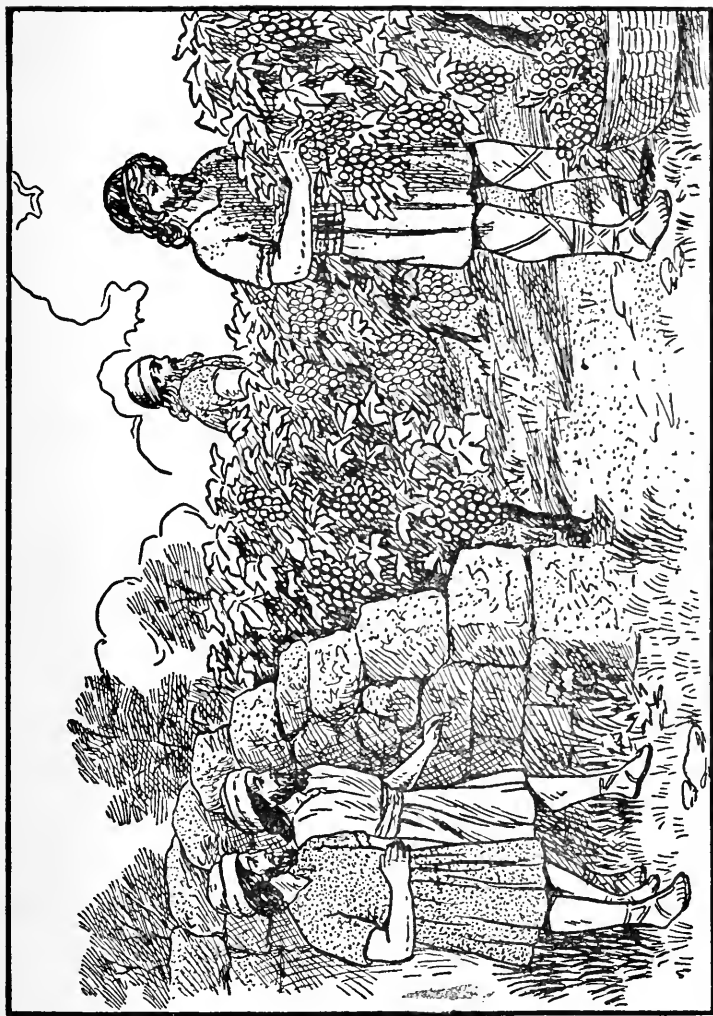
"A glorious opportunity it was to go onward. Their enemies, at least those surrounding them then, could do them no harm, for were they not either conquered or subdued? The land for which they had endured so much, was it not just before them? To press onward was to gain all; to fall back meant remorse and shame. But what was beyond those mountains that hid from their anxious eyes the land of their inheritance?

"At last twelve of the noblest men among them were chosen to act as spies, to go and see whether what their fathers had told them of the place was true. These gladly agreed to go upon the dangerous expedition. With their leader's command to be strong and of good courage and to return with samples of the fruit of the land still ringing in their ears they boldly set out. Let us in imagination follow them as they disappear beyond the mountains.

"Hurrying along through a vast wilderness, they pass the great sea that speaks of God's curse upon the early settlers of the land. Then entering the fertile valley of the Jordan River, they press their way onward over the hills, through ravines, past desolate caves and lonely haunts, straight to the old home of the ancient couple. Here they see no grand mansion marking the spot, no memorial of the long ago, but instead a new and prosperous city. They soon learn that the inhabitants are strong and powerful men, some of them being actually giants. For forty days they explore the country, going from one end to the other. Then taking samples of the luscious fruits, they return to the camp of their people.

"What a report they brought! 'Surely it is a land flowing with milk and honey,' they said, 'and see! this is some of the fruit we saw there.' And then they told their friends of the cities and of the giants that dwelt within their walls. 'All of their cities are walled,' they said, 'and the people are so large that we appear as grasshoppers in their sight. Besides these giants there are many people dwelling in the mountains and along the coast of the sea.'

"On hearing about the great walls and the terrible giants, the people gave



"The inhabitants are strong and powerful men."

a loud cry of grief and dismay. All night they wept and complained. 'Would God we had died in the country whence we came or in the wilderness!' they wailed. 'Why, oh! why has the Lord brought us here to fall by the sword, that our wives and little ones should be a prey? Let us choose a captain to lead us back.'

"Then two of the spies said: 'The land is exceedingly good, and we are well able to take it, for the Lord is with us. You need not fear the people, for their strength is departed from them. Instead of their destroying us, we shall destroy them. Do not be afraid.' But the people would not heed them. Instead they became enraged and said, 'Let us stone these men.' The lives of the two faithful spies were in great danger.

"There is no telling where the thing would have ended had not the Lord interposed. He manifested his presence to them all and said to their leader, 'I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them.' Their leader pleaded with God to forgive, if possible, the complaining multitude. God heard him, but caused the spies that had discouraged them to fall dead.

"But the Lord said he would not allow the people to march onward and possess the land. He used their own words as a judgment against them and said, 'The murmurers must wander in the wilderness one year for every day that the spies spent in exploring the land, or until they are all dead. When they were all dead, he said, the two spies who had urged them to go forward could lead their little ones, who they said would be a prey to the giants, and who would then be grown, into the land they themselves might have possessed.

"Then the people realized what they had lost. So close to the beautiful land and yet forbidden to enter it. What a disappointment! and yet how well deserved! In agony some cried: "Oh, let us go! We must go! We are so close! and in their eagerness they started, regardless of their leader's warning that the Lord would not go with them. Some went as far as the top of a mountain, but were either driven back or slain. So those ungrateful people were forced to wander in the wilderness for forty years, or until they died."

"Didn't they go in and kill the giants?" Ethel asked disappointedly.

"Oh yes, Ethel. When the forty years were ended, the younger people went. By the younger people I mean those who were children at the time the

spies returned. The two spies who had encouraged the people to go forward, now led this new generation right into the heart of the beautiful country. There they saw the high walls surrounding a great city crumble and fall before them, and they often looked upon the huge forms of the giants that they had slain. I haven't time to tell you of their exploits, but we can take the brave spies for our example

"Their characters were not formed in a day nor through the boldness of this one great undertaking. The making of them began when the two men were young. They had long been slaying troublesome giants in their human natures, and this had made them brave and strong in other battles. They had cherished noble ambitions, and had kept their minds pure. They had stood up for truth and right before, or they could not have done so now at the risk of their lives.

"Take these brave men for your example, children, and depend upon God to help you either to march against a host of giants or to stand for right in the face of death. Never advertise the devil's strength, but always mention God's power.

"In God's great battle-field men may step aside and think the vacant places will soon be filled by others. This is true. Their presence may not long be missed by their comrades; but when the roll is called up yonder, how sad they will be because their names are not spoken? Others may have filled their places, and the strong army may have marched on to the giants territory and there won glorious victories; but these unfaithful ones, having had no part in the battles, will receive no reward. O children, be faithful! Every one is created for a wise purpose. No child comes into the world without the Lord's smile and approval resting upon it. God's purpose is not that they live for themselves, for the devil, nor for anything but his own glory.

"Our actions are simply the fruit of our thoughts, our desires fulfilled. We may try to appear refined and may put on polished airs; but remember that as polish causes the roughness upon our furniture to be more prominent, just so our trying to appear what we are not reveals our character more plainly, and, like the false spies, we shall fall before the sword of the death-angel. Always to be true to yourself, and strive to make your life a blessing to others.

"But now it is bedtime. I suppose our next story can be from our book."

CHAPTER VII.

FAIR GRATITUDE.

SEVERAL things had occurred to hinder the little reading-circle; but when again the book was taken up, the story was found to be, not about a giant, but about a fair creature known as Gratitude. It told of her rescue by the brave knight from Giant Pride.

The life of the knight, so the story ran, was not one of rest. He well knew that fresh labors were before him each day, but he worked with a gladsome heart. He felt honored by the permission to serve the king and to devote his strength to the cause he loved—ridding the land of the troublesome giants.

One autumn evening when the sun was setting behind a bank of clouds, tipping the edges with golden light, the knight was passing along the side of a soft marshy place known as the morass of Forgetfulness. Thinking that he heard a faint cry, he paused to listen, for by a champion of the truth the voice of distress is never heard in vain. Wide and dreary the swamp lay before him. Not a tree broke the dismal expanse, but rank weeds grew thick in many parts, and rushes, which seemed bending beneath the white mist that spread over the morass. Their presence betokened that of water; but no silvery sheet reflected the falling splendor of the setting sun; the mantling green upon the pools shut out the light, and filled the air with unwholesome odors.

Remembrance of the past may be painful, when we review our mistakes and recollect our errors; but better, far better, to wander even over the painful Desert of Regret than to lose sense of both pleasure and sorrow together in the fatal morass of Forgetfulness.

Again came that cry, even more faint than before, but the knight was sure that he heard one. As he could scarcely see through the mist, he lifted his voice and shouted. From the swamp an answer came as from the voice of a woman in distress. "Help! help!" it cried, "for I am sinking! In the slough of Forgetfulness I shall be lost!"

The knight hesitated for a moment, and then, springing forward with a light step, he went for some distance in safety. He could soon see before



"He threw it out to the sinking woman."

him the form of a woman struggling in the swamp, but between them the ground was too soft for him to travel and much less rescue her. For a few minutes he was puzzled, and then he thought of the strong cord of Love by which he had drawn himself out of the pit that giant Selfishness had prepared for him. This long cord he had borne along with him ever since, wound in many a fold round his form. Hastily unwrapping this cord, he threw it out to the sinking woman, and grasping it firmly, she was soon drawn to firmer ground.

As she stood trembling before the knight, she thanked him again and again, and he thought that a being more lovely he had never beheld. The angel sweetness of her face told of a spirit pure, loving, and holy, and every movement was one of grace. No wonder he called her Gratitude the Fair.

In answer to his question regarding her presence in the dismal swamp, she said that she was fleeing from stern giant Pride, who had been seeking to destroy her. Her very name, she went on to say, was hateful to his spirit. Her life would be safer even with bears or lions than with him. Just that morning he had tracked her to that place on her way home with a basket full of benefits that she wished to preserve. In her haste she had dropped them, and when she fled where he dared not follow, she looked back and saw him scattering her fruits over the swamp.

"By his cruelty I must at last perish!" she cried, but the knight assured her that he would go with her to her home.

"Fear not, fair Gratitude," he said; "this sword shall be drawn in thy defense. Sooner will I die than suffer thee to be destroyed; thou that art beloved of all the children of Virtue. Let me escort thee now to thy home; then without delay will I seek out that giant who would sink Gratitude in Forgetfulness."

So Gratitude led the knight toward her dwelling, and as they went, they talked much of the giant who was now to be overcome.

"Pride is a prince among the giants," said the maiden; "not one has greater power than he. He is also one of the most artful of the foes: he can often assume the manner and garb of a citizen of thy land, and he can speak its language in a way to deceive even an experienced ear."

"How, then, shall I know him?" asked the knight.

"Though he speaks the language well," remarked the maiden, "yet he is unacquainted with the characters in which it is written. These Pride has never learned, and by this thou mayst easily detect him. But there is a friend of mine, named Experience, who dwells not very far from this place. When thou hast passed over the hill to our right, the sound of his hammer on the anvil will be thy sure guide to his forge. From him thou mayst gain knowledge more than I can give. He will direct thee to the haunts of the giant. He will also tell thee of a marvelous and precious thing that once belonged to the treasury of thy king, but was stolen thence by the giant. A high glorious reward has been offered to him who will restore to its rightful owner the golden staff of the Will. Mayst thou have strength to wrest it from Pride."

"And may I be granted strength to free thee from thy persecutor!"

"Thou hast already slain one foe to me and mine," replied fair Gratitude. "I was long an object of hate to giant Selfishness, since I helped to fix by his fatal pit that cord of Love with which thou hast since saved me. Once I was myself almost stifled in the pit, but Experience came to my succor."

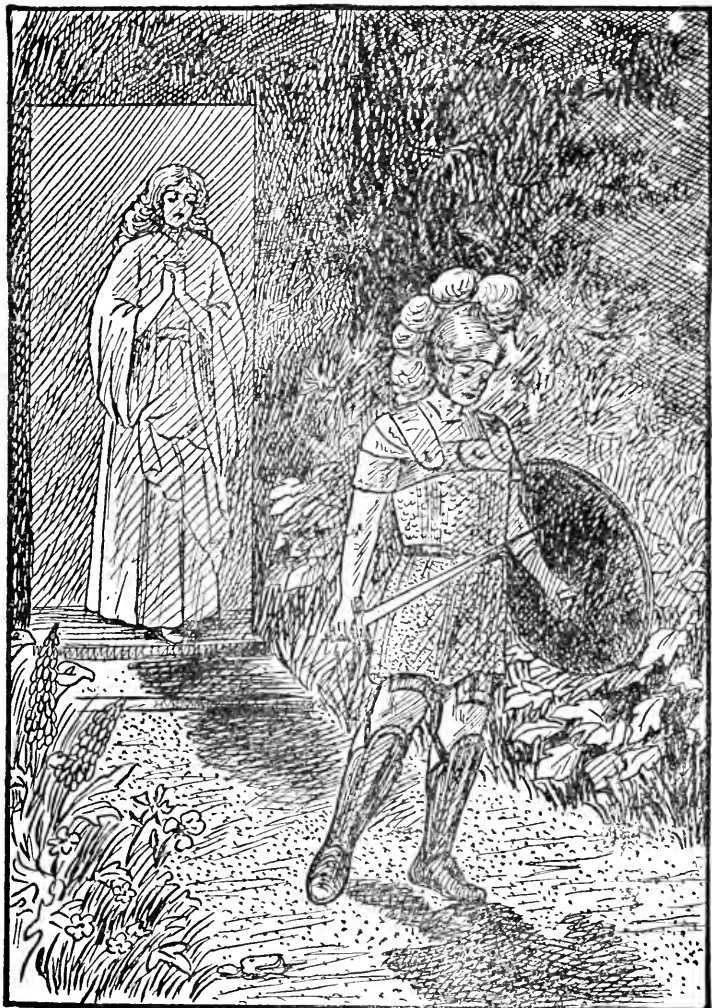
"I have often heard of thy name, fair Gratitude," said the knight, "but I never beheld thee before."

"I have been much talked of in the world, but little known," she replied. "Thousands have eagerly promised to make me their companion till death, but on their way to my home have turned back or have been lost in the morass of Forgetfulness."

By this time the maiden and the knight had reached the dwelling of Gratitude. A small humble abode it appeared, with a doorway so low that the knight had to stoop his plumed helmet in order to enter. But no sooner was he within the place than he gazed around with admiration. He found himself in a goodly dwelling, lighted by a beautiful silver lamp, which cast soft radiance like moonlight; and in diamond letters inlaid in the clear metal glittered the word "Memory" It was the daily occupation of fair Gratitude to keep this lamp perfectly bright; and with her own hand she fed it with precious oils, which shed a delicious perfume through the place.

By the mild light of Memory the knight perceived that the room in which he stood was hung round with exquisite pictures, all of which represented scenes beautiful to the eye and pleasing to the heart. In one a mother was tenderly bending over the cradle of a helpless babe; in another a father, with the best of books open before him was instructing a fair-haired child. One showed a poor widow receiving aid from a generous friend; the next, a truant led back by an older companion to the path he had lost—half struggling, half resisting, and yet clinging to the guide, whose looks told of pity and of love. An open door led into an inner apartment, which was even fairer and more preciously adorned than the first, and into which fair Gratitude often retired for the purpose of prayer and praise, for this was her dearest occupation, her highest delight.

After the knight had spent a short time in examining the pictures hung round the walls and had received from Gratitude minute directions concerning the way to the dwelling of Experience, who could guide him to the haunts of giant Pride, he took his leave of the gentle maiden. She stood at the doorway to see him depart on his dangerous but glorious mission. As she lingered there with the faint moonbeams falling upon her lovely form, her clasped hands, and her flowing hair, the knight thought that she looked like an angel of light blessing him before the battle; and as he pursued his way, he could fancy that he beheld fair Gratitude yet, trimming and feeding her silver lamp, and gazing fondly on the pictures that reminded her of the past.



"She stood at the doorway to see him depart."

CHAPTER VIII.

GIANT PRIDE.

THE KNIGHT rested for some hours that night in a small hut by the wayside, which he found deserted and empty. He awoke in the morning refreshed, and, girding on his sword anew, set out in search of Experience. He walked on for some time without meeting any adventure, until he judged that he must be near the forge; but, proceeding further, he sat down near a small stream, which flowed brightly over pebbles and sand, reflecting the emerald moss that clothed its banks in the willows that bent over its waters.

Here the knight bathed his hands and his face and, stretching himself full-length on the turf, enjoyed the stillness of the scene.

"A fair sky above, a goodly carpet below, and pleasant meditation for thy companions! Thou hast well chosen thy place of repose, brave champion, and well earned thy moments of rest!" said the voice of some one behind him.

The knight lifted up his eyes and beheld near him a stately figure, clad like himself in the armor of a knight, but bearing instead of a sword, a massive crooked staff, which appeared to be made of some dark heavy metal.

"Dost thou come as friend or foe?" exclaimed the knight, springing up and instinctively laying his hand on the hilt of his sword.

"I am a friend to all gallant spirits like thee."

"And a servant of my king?"

"At least the enemy of those who are his foes," replied the strange knight, evading the question. He threw himself carelessly down upon the turf, but the true knight, whose mind was not quite satisfied yet, remained standing until his further inquiries were answered.

"Thou hast no sword?"

"I have left it at home; none can use it more skillfully than I; but in its place I at present carry this weighty staff, which I have found at least equally successful in slaying the giants whom I have encountered," and as he raised his strong arm and shook the staff on high, a deadly weapon it appeared in his hand.

"What giants hast thou slain?" inquired the true knight, with a growing respect for his companion.

"I crushed Meanness with one blow of my staff; he never spake a single word after. I drove Gluttony to hide in caves and holes. I penetrated the strong fort of Avarice and forced him to yield up some of his treasures. I killed Cowardice and cut off his head. In short, I believe that the good cause never found a champion less ready to flinch from its defense."

"And thy name, brave knight?" said the true knight, now seating himself beside him without misgiving.

"My name is High-Spirit. I am of ancient family; I am connected with the noblest of the land!"

All this time the stranger had been speaking in the language of the country of the knight. There was something, perhaps, a little peculiar in the way he pronounced his words, something that was like the accent of a foreigner, not of a native; but still he spake well, and the heart of his listener was rejoiced to think that he had been joined by a comrade so valiant.

"I have heard of thy exploits," continued the stranger-knight, "and have mightily triumphed in thy success. Thou wert not the first to attack Giant Untruth; he was once sorely wounded by me, and how he escaped alive I know not!"

"Not, I trust, by thy holding parley with the foe?"

"Holding parley with Untruth!" exclaimed the stranger, turning round fiercely: "I would dash out the brains of any one who dared but to hint such a thing!"

Words such as these sounded strange in the ears of the knight. In their proud boldness they were so unlike the language that was spoken by the servants of the king, that the warning of Gratitude flashed across his mind, and he drew himself off a little further from his comrade.

"Thy arm is mighty and thy hand strong, but the power given to us is not to be employed in avenging any insult to ourselves," he said aloud.

"The power given to us!" repeated the stranger with a scornful smile. "The strength with which I fight is my own, and," he added, firmly grasping his heavy staff, "I use it when and against whom I please!"

"I do misdoubt thee sorely!" cried the true knight, springing to his feet; "methinks thou art little like a champion of the Truth. How shall I know thee for one?"

"Speak I not in thine own tongue?" said the stranger, also rising, but more slowly, from the earth. "Thou art strangely suspicious, my comrade!"

"Canst thou read this?" cried the knight, rapidly drawing with his sheathed sword a few words on a spot where some white sand had been left by the receding river. "*I repent. I am grateful.*" Such were the brief sentences hastily traced by the knight, the first that came to his mind. He pointed to the writing with his sword, and, turning his steady gaze upon the stranger, he repeated his question, "Canst thou read this?"

The false knight scarcely glanced at the words, which he knew that he could never master: with a glare like a tiger's before he springs, whirling his mighty staff round his head, he uttered but the exclamation, "Ha! thou knowest me!" and rushed in his fury to the attack.

Oh! who has not felt the fearful strength of Pride, who now engaged in deadly conflict with the brave knight? Never had the champion been more sorely beset, never had he felt more the need of help! Even his good sword seemed scarcely to avail him here; the giant who had suddenly risen to his formidable height as soon as his real nature was discovered, parried every blow aimed at him so well, showered down his own with such rapidity and strength that foot by foot the true knight gave way before him. Strong indeed is the weapon of "the Will;" few are there upon earth who can withstand it.

One crushing stroke fell upon the knight's helmet; it gave not way, that covering of well-tempered steel, but the knight reeled and staggered with the blow; sparks seemed to fly from his eyes; he could scarcely see his enemy before him; for an instant he was blinded by Pride, and scarcely conscious of anything but the faint cry of Conscience as she fled to seek aid for her champion!

Down came another blow upon the knight's right arm! it dropped numb; the sword fell from his grasp! The giant, foaming with rage, pressed on his advantage; he dashed his fainting adversary to the ground, and raised his



"'Canst thou read this?' cried the knight."

heavy staff to destroy him. At that moment, that terrible moment, when all appeared lost forever, a stone thrown from some unseen hand struck the strong arm that was raised to smite. Pride started at the unexpected blow, and for an instant let fall his staff and glanced around to see who was his new assailant.

Precious opportunity that might never come again! The knight with his left hand seized the dangerous weapon, and even as he lay on the ground, struck the foot of Pride with all the force that he could muster. Yet little impression did that blow make on the giant; it rather served to stir up his rage than to wound him. He stooped, not to wrest "the Will" from the fallen knight, as at that time he might easily have done, but to make himself master of the knight's sword, which lay bright and glittering on the turf.

But the wondrous weapon was not one which could be wielded by the unholy hand of Pride. The golden hilt which the knight had rested on so often, burnt the hand of the enemy of his king as though it had been formed of red-hot iron. With a cry of pain the giant dropped it from his hold, and the next moment it shone in the grasp of the knight!

Yes, the champion of the Truth was again on his feet, wounded, weary, but full of courage and hope. The painful struggle was coming to a close; thrice and again he struck boldly at Pride, and oh! the joy, the relief, when at last the most dangerous of his foes bit the dust. Every muscle quivering with the efforts he had made, breathless, gasping, scarcely able to believe his own success, the knight stood by the lifeless form of the giant, leaning upon his own faithful sword!

And now he was approached by an old man with silvery hair and a long white beard, but a form still strong and unbent, and a face whose furrows had been made rather by thought than by time. It was Experience himself, who, in the hour of need had come to the assistance of the knight, and had flung that stone which, at the critical moment, had diverted the attention of the giant. Warm was the gratitude of the knight, though his faltering tongue had scarcely power to express it. Experience, with kindly pity for the suffering knight, invited him to his dwelling, which was near, where rest and refreshment might be found, and where his wounds would be skilfully dressed.

"And oh! leave not that behind, noble knight," cried Experience, pointing to the dark, crooked staff of "the Will," which lay near the dead body of Pride; "take it; it once belonged to thy king. It is precious when devoted to him; it is the noblest fruit of thy triumph to be able to lay it at his feet." The knight obeyed, and with feeble step followed his new guide, whose manner, though grave and almost stern, yet inspired him with confidence and respect.

The dwelling of Experience was on a hill, which commanded a wide prospect around. Part of it was divided from the rest, where a glowing furnace, an anvil, and various tools hung around, sufficiently showed the occupation of its possessor.

Balm was poured into the bleeding wounds of the knight; the mist before his eyes cleared away; he felt himself reviving again.

"Oh! Experience," he said, as he laid his hand on "the Will," "how can this instrument, once used by Pride, be ever an acceptable offering to my king?"

Experience took from a small casket a phial labeled "Submission," which contained a colorless fluid. He poured a few drops upon the dark heavy metal, then rubbed the staff with a rough hairy cloth, and wherever the liquid had touched, there was a spot of bright glittering gold! "This rough cloth is 'Discipline,'" said the old man; with patience, through its rubbing, thou shalt see all the value of 'the Will' when restored to its rightful owner."

"Yet I can not offer to my king that which is crooked and bent. It bears too evident tokens of having been in the service of Pride!" And as the knight spoke, he tried and tried again with all his might to straighten the massive staff, but the tough metal resisted all his efforts.

"'The Will' is crooked indeed, but it may be straightened," said Experience; "we have other ways of working. My furnace of Affliction is near." So saying, before the knight had time to reply, he plunged the staff into the red, glowing fire.

"Give it back!" exclaimed the knight with impatience. "Any way, any way but this!"

"No way but this," said the old man firmly, keeping back the hand that

would have snatched the staff from the fire. "See how the gold is brightening! See how the metal is softening in the furnace! Submit 'the Will' to what is needful to make it a precious offering, acceptable and pure." So saying, Experience drew it from the furnace of Affliction, and laid it on the anvil of Trial. He struck it with his heavy iron hammer, but was interrupted by the knight.

"No more—thou wilt destroy it; no more—it is enough!"

"Not yet," replied the old man, and struck it again.

"Stay thy hand!" exclaimed the knight; "it can bear no more!"

"Yet a little patience," cried Experience, and struck it again.

Then "the Will" was restored to the knight—straight, pure, beautiful. Oh! how unlike the staff which had been so deadly in the grasp of Pride! As the knight stood gazing on the fair gift before him, once more and for the last time, the shining robe and star-wreath of Conscience flashed on his sight! Never before had her smile been so glad, so beaming with the radiance of heaven.

"The work is done—the fight is over!" she exclaimed. "Thou art summoned to the presence of thy king! A messenger is even now waiting to conduct thee to the home which thou so long hast desired! Go bearing with thee the offering of a conquered 'Will'—the acknowledgment that not even that should be thine own, and the remembrance of foe bravely met and overcome, through the might of him who armed thee for the fight! Go in humility; go in joy, confiding in the love which hath preserved thee through temptation, and never will leave thee nor forsake thee; go where all is gladness, rejoicing, and peace, where war and danger shall be known no more!"

All were silent for a time after the book was closed. Every heart was busy with its own thoughts and eager to hear some things explained.



"Stay thy hand!"

CHAPTER IX.

PRESERVING BENEFITS.

WHEN at last Nellie said, "What kind of fruit was it that Gratitude had in her basket?" her mother replied:

"It was benefits. She had been gathering up her benefits and blessings, and she was intending to preserve them in her lamp of Memory. Pride so frightened her that she dropped them and fled; then the giant threw them into the swamp of Forgetfulness. This is a very good illustration of the way people are doing today. They feel thankful to their friends for kindness shown them, but pride frightens them when they want to show their gratitude, and the benefit is soon forgotten.

"Never allow pride to keep you from showing your friends that you appreciate what they have done for you, and never be afraid to speak of their kindness to others. Try to show your gratitude by doing them a favor whenever you can. The Bible says that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and you can give pleasure to your friends by letting them know that you appreciate their interest in you."

"I wonder what was meant by the Will that was taken from the palace of the king," Benny said when he saw that his mother had finished speaking to his sister.

"The will, like conscience," his mother replied, "is given to every one in life. Both are very useful when used by the Christian, but oh! so often they are destroyed or lost by a wicked and sinful life. The conscience warns a person of danger, and the will makes it possible for him to resist and shun evil. In some the will and conscience are very much stronger than in others, but in all these are strong enough to enable them to resist evil if only they will listen to the warnings of their conscience and exercise their will-power. But it is not safe to yield to sin in any form; for every downward step weakens both the will and the conscience, thus making it much harder to resist the next temptation. When lost through sinful life, they can only be restored by the power of God, and even then pride will, if possible, wrest them away.

"Sometimes we hear of breaking the will of a child when he kicks and



"You stood with your little hand holding the banister."

screams in his mother's arms, and he is called stubborn and naughty. It is all right to conquer that child; he should be taught obedience, but not right there before the eyes of the public. If he is old enough to listen to reason, the mother should talk to him when they are alone, and patiently endeavor to make him understand that he must never act that way again. Then if he does, he will know what to expect, and she can take him away and enforce her words.

"I remember, Harry, an experience that I had with you when you were about two and one-half years of age. I wanted you to walk up-stairs, and you wanted to be carried. I told you positively that you must obey me, and when I saw that you were determined not to mind, I threatened to whip you. Still you stood with your little hand holding to the banister, ignoring my threats. Seeing that you did not intend to obey me, I carried out my threats, but the punishment only increased your stubbornness. Nothing that I could say or do would induce you to lift your feet to the step above you.

"Realizing at length that I must do something, I caught hold of your foot and placed it upon the next step, but still you were as if riveted to the spot and did not move until I lifted and placed the other foot beside its mate. I do not remember how long it took us to climb those stairs; but when we reached the last step, your little heart was as full of rebellion as it had been upon the first. I pleaded, I cried, I scolded, and I prayed, but to no avail. There was not a sign of your yielding. Your heart was beating wildly and your breath came quickly, but there were no sobs or tears, although I had whipped you very hard. Anger and resistance were written in every line of your face, and you were trembling violently. I was almost frightened, thinking that perhaps I had gone too far.

"You were in this condition when I placed your second foot upon the landing at the head of the stairs. As I lifted your second foot, you were as rebellious as you had been on the bottom step; but the instant it was placed upon the floor, I saw a change come over you. The hard anger lines relaxed, and, turning to me, you threw both your little arms about my neck, and I could feel the sobs welling up within your bosom. I had conquered, and you knew it.

"Children, it was then that I learned a precious secret that has been of untold value to me ever since. Had I given in and ignored my command and threat, the will that has since been a great help to Harry would have given him many a hard knock as it did the knight in his battle with the giant Pride. From the moment that his little arms encircled my neck his will was conquered."

"I declare, Harry," exclaimed Benny, turning to his brother, "I didn't think that you were such a wilful little chap. I wonder if Mama had such a time with us all."

"No, Benny, it was different with the rest of you. Your wills were not so strong, and you were more easily influenced than your brother. I do not remember that I had any definite battle with you; nevertheless I had to help you to conquer your will. Your fault was in trying to imitate others. Especially was this true in regard to making witty remarks and using slang phrases. Many is the time that I have taken you into my arms and explained the wrongfulness of these things, and I suppose you remember some of them still.

"Your nature and Harry's are very very different, as I explained to you both not long ago. If you were brought up in different homes and with opposite surroundings, you would not appear like brothers at all. You may think it is hard because you have so much difficulty in understanding each other now; but if you will study and compare your faults as you see them day by day, you will learn to have more charity for others. Then the faults of others will not seem so great.

"Every person has his natural human nature. Sometimes one person does something that to another has the appearance of evil and that is not at all what the latter would do under similar circumstances. Yet the person who performed the act felt perfectly clear in doing it. He committed no sin, since he knew no better. His attention had never been called to the wrong in that particular thing.

"Now, if you or somebody else who has been differently brought up should try to do what that person did, what would happen? You would immediately feel condemned and say, 'Oh! I should never have thought of

doing it had I not noticed some one else doing it. I thought that if it was not wrong for him, it would not be for me.' Do not make this mistake, children. Never do anything that you see another do, simply because he does it without feeling condemnation. He is probably unconscious of its being a fault, as the knight was when he met giant Pride. It was sometime before the knight recognized Pride as his enemy, and when he did was soon severely wounded.

"I wish that you would tell us something that we did when we were small," Ethel said, placing the emphasis on the last word.

"Well, let me see," her mother answered after a moment of earnest thought; "I do not think of anything special that either of you ever did. You always played together quite well except when you both wanted to be Mother. Sometimes I had to talk about selfishness then. Even when you were quite small, it was difficult for you to give in on this point."

"How I wish that I could have looked inside the home of Gratitude!," Ethel murmured a few minutes later. "How glad I am that she was not killed!"

"Yes, Ethel, this world would be a dreary place indeed if Gratitude were killed. To many, though, she is dead. There are people around us who know nothing of her sweet character and graces. They are like those who promised to make the fairy their life-time companion and failed to keep their word.

"The pictures that adorned the walls of her home must have been very beautiful, but you can see just such scenes every day if you will only look for them. We can paint some ourselves by doing little acts of kindness to others and cheering those who are sad. If such scenes adorn the walls of our hearts, our lamp of Memory will send forth delicious odors, and there will be no danger of our benefits being lost in the swamp of Forgetfulness.

CHAPTER X.

OVERCOME BY GIANTS.

THE STORY of the knight's conflicts with the giants made a deep impression upon the children, and many useful and helpful thoughts were brought to their minds. On one occasion when they were all together, something was said about the knight's bravery and armor, and Mr. H. explained the warfare of the Christian.

"You are all," he said, "in the position of the hero. The foes that he had to conquer you also must fight. You have the same aid to encourage you and the same motives to rouse. The same giant may not be as fierce to you all, but every one has some enemies with whom he must struggle, in a strength and an armor that are given to him.

"It is the duty of every parent to teach his children to overcome and destroy these enemies. It is parents' duty, but alas! many fathers and mothers do not see it thus, consequently all around are those who have been allowed to ignorantly cultivate habits that have matured into giants strong and ferocious.

"I well remember one instance of this kind, in which the giants were the overcomers, and I will relate the story to you. It is a story about three boys who were once our neighbors. We were then living in a very hilly part of the country in another State. The ways of the people and the scenery were all strange to us, so quite often, from our doorway, we saw many new and interesting things.

"A short distance from our house, at the base of a high hill, was a large field used as a pasture for the cows owned by people living in the city. It was within this pasture that I first noticed the boys. They were at work cutting down some tall weeds and thistles. There was nothing strange in what the boys were doing, and as I watched them leaving their work now and then to run playfully toward each other, I thought how boylike it was for them to behave that way.

"A friend was with me, and as we sat there upon the porch visiting, we forgot the boys for a time and began to admire the scenery about us. The

hills were beautiful to look upon as they rose above us. Their majesty and strength seemed to speak of the One who had formed them so many years before. One great mountain-like hill with an old fort upon its summit stood as a monument of the past. It had been the scene of many an open-air tragedy, and we could not help wondering how the battles had been carried on.

"Suddenly our attention was called from the hills to the three boys in the pasture. The boys were still running toward each other and back again to their work, but they were no longer in fun. Their wild cries and curses became louder and more distinct every moment, and it was plain to be seen that they were fighting. Springing to our feet, we hurried to the spot, hoping, if possible, to restore peace and keep the children from injuring each other. It was with the greatest difficulty that we managed to separate them, and even after they had been parted they would rush back and renew their fighting with as much desperation as at first.

"While we were wondering what to do, a sound from behind caused us to turn around. There, to our surprise, we saw a huge man, with an ax in his hand, coming toward us, and behind him a woman, who was nearly his equal in size and strength. We failed at first to understand his words, for he was so excited and used so many oaths. Not knowing who he was, we began at once to explain that we were trying to separate the boys before they injured each other. Our words only made him more furious, and with renewed curses and a demon-like face he leaped toward us, but his wife held him back until we were at a safe distance.

"Later we learned that the enraged man was the father of the three boys. He was anxious to have his boys learn how to fight and at home encouraged them in it. Upon this particular occasion he was watching them from his doorway, and our interference with his plans enraged him.

• "I had the opportunity to watch these boys for a number of years, or until they became young men. They were then a terror to the neighborhood, and it was unsafe to be near them, for they had so little regard for life. All three were drunkards, gamblers, and thieves, and they knew what it meant to be behind prison-bars. Giants Hate, Lust, Selfishness, and Untruth had grown to their full stature, and the poor boys were their slaves.



"We began at once to explain."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAN IN THE WOODS.

“**N**OW, MAMA, you tell us a story,” Nellie said coaxingly as her father finished his. “We want to hear of something that has happened to you.”

“Well, suppose I tell you of a nutting-expedition your father and I took in those ancient hills of which you have been hearing. We certainly had an interesting time that day,” and Mrs. H. smiled a peculiar smile as she looked into her husband’s eyes. Mr. H. returned the smile and nodded his approval, so she began her story.

“One day late in the fall your father and I decided that we should like to go nutting, and as four of our friends were in the same notion, we were not long in arranging to go.

“The day decided upon arrived; a three seated wagon drawn by a good team of horses was waiting for us; the large well-filled lunch-baskets were placed in the wagon; empty sacks were stored beneath the seats; and we were all ready to start on the trip. A few directions were given to the children, who were to remain with their Auntie; good-bys were said, and we were on our way.

“The morning was ideal, and, filled with the spirit of the occasion, we were a happy party. As we drove along in the brisk morning air, we wondered where we could find room for our bags of nuts. Of course, we expected to get a great many, for had not a friend given us directions where to go and how to get the nuts? and had we not looked at the great pile of nuts he had gathered the day before? In answer to our inquiries about the ownership of the woods and the privileges given the public to enter them, our friend had said, ‘It will be all right; for I am acquainted with the owner, and he has given me permission to go where I want to.’ So on we rode a merry crowd.

“Down through the city we went, for the nuts were in the hills on the other side near the river. My companions had much to talk about, but I soon became absorbed in the beauties of nature and the scenes around me. The city was an old one, made popular by a huge mound, that the mound-builders

had made there years and years before as a burying-place for their dead. As a great sepulcher it rose before us that morning, and I thought of the bodies that had long since returned to dust and now helped to form that vast mass of soil. I thought of them as a people and of how peculiar must have been their manner of life; and I wondered if Jesus would delay his coming until another people should rise up to fill our places upon the earth as we were filling that of the mound-builders, and what would be left as a memorial of us in such a case.

"While my thoughts were running thus, I saw in the distance the great walls of the penitentiary, and I trembled as I thought of the many souls locked within those gloomy cells. I thought of their loved ones, who were bearing not only their shame and disgrace at home, but also the burden of their sorrow. And then, in thought, my own precious boys came before me, and I determined to do all in my power to train them aright while young and tender, and to warn them of the dangers awaiting them in life.

"Then the river, the great, winding, majestic river, with its queer boats and rafts, came in sight. For some distance the road lay along its banks. Here and there was a house-boat now anchored because of low water, but ready to be lifted upon the bosom of that mighty stream and carried to a place of safety, instead of being flooded with its muddy waters and perhaps wrecked. All along the bank the drift left by the springtime flood was still dangling from the branches of the trees, and in many places the high-water mark could still be plainly distinguished upon the houses.

"When we came to the hills, I was filled with awe and wonder at the work of God's hand. The surface of the hills, the rocks and all seemed stamped with divine power and majesty. The withered flowers; the brown trees and grass; the fields lying in the distance, warm in the autumn light and darkened now and then by flitting cloud-shadows; and the hills stretching away into the blue—all seemed to speak of the great hand that formed them. Then, there were the tree-clad ridges rolling along like mighty billows into the far-distant sky, and now and then a glimpse of the winding river below.

"Following one of the ridges and passing several farm-houses, we at last came to the special woods to which we had been directed. First of all, we care-

fully tied our horses and made plans for the day. It was still early, so the men, after shaking the nuts from several walnut-trees, started off on an exploring expedition, leaving us women to gather the nuts we could find close by. By noon our sacks were well filled, and when the men returned and gathered up the sacks, we found that there was a wagon-load and no room for seats. Still no one was sad, for all were sure of getting home, even if some had to walk, and the luncheon was what we all were interested in just then.

"The place where our dinner was to be eaten having been chosen; the horses having been removed to a place where they could be more easily watched and fed; the lunch-baskets having been brought forth and unpacked, and the contents spread upon the clean cloth on the ground, we were ready for the best part of the occasion. Sandwiches, fried chicken, fruit, tarts, pickles, salads, pies and cakes, rapidly disappeared. It was surprising to see what appetites the open air and the exercise had given us all. The woods seemed to have added to the flavor of the food. Even the horses were enjoying their generous allowance with keen relish.

"A little squirrel came down to investigate us, and I threw him a morsel of food, only to see him run away without it. An ambitious woodpecker ceased thumping at the bark of an old tree long enough to look sideways at us and then resumed his occupation. And the whir of wings told of a partridge in the vicinity. Some horses and cattle could be seen grazing in the distance, but aside from this suggestion of the farm, we seemed to be away from all civilization.

"Dinner at last being finished, the remains of the lunch packed away, and remarks made about the loss of ambition, all resorted to a large chestnut-grove that had been discovered during the forenoon. Soon a nice supply of these nuts were gathered, and they with the walnuts, hickory-nuts, and butternuts, made a nice collection, and all decided that it was time to go home.

"By emptying part of the sacks into the wagon-box and piling the remainder on top of them, we managed to find room for the seats; but all decided that the safest place for us would be on the ground until we came to level ground. With many laughing remarks about our load of nuts and its appearance when passing through the city, we hurried on.

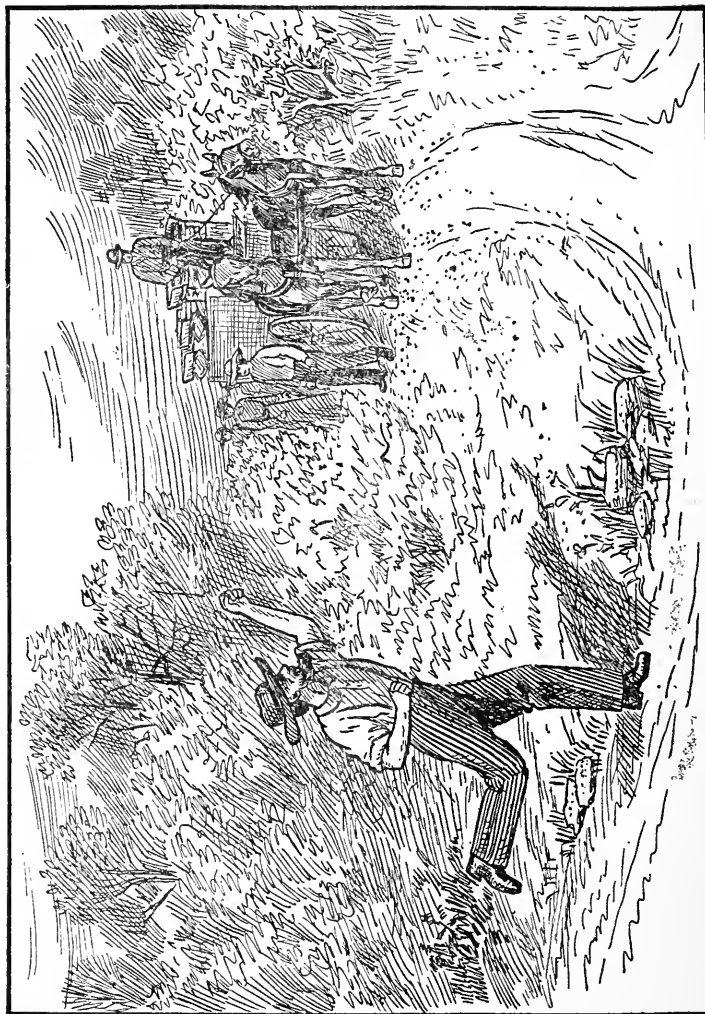
"Just as we were driving out upon the highway, we noticed a man coming toward us—a man with clinched hands, flashing eyes, drawn features, and oaths pouring from his mouth so rapidly that we could not understand one from the other. I shall never forget that moment! Your father hastened forward to meet the man in order to learn, if possible, what was the matter. Amidst the terrible oaths he found out that we had been trespassing and were being threatened with the law.

"The infuriated man would listen to no explanation of how we came to be there, and for a few minutes it looked as though your father's life were in danger. The stranger managed to say, while shaking his fist in your father's face, that he had watched us pass his house in the morning and had been waiting for our return in the evening so that he might have a chance to arrest us. He said he had noticed the load pass the day before and meant to put a stop to such doings at once. All efforts to pacify him were in vain; and, continuing his oaths and threats, he started down the road.

"The truth of the situation suddenly flashed upon us, and we realized for the first time that we really had no right to enter those woods without first finding out whether it would be all right. We had taken another man's word, and now we were in trouble. Looking at one another in speechless wonder and bewilderment, we stood still, not knowing what to do or think. The man down the road finally stood still; and, seeing that he was waiting for us, we hurried on to where he was standing. Again we tried to explain to him how a friend had told us that it would be all right for us to enter the woods and gather what nuts we wanted, for he had obtained permission from the owner of the land and the nuts were just going to waste.

"With many more oaths and threats, he told us that the owner had no right to give any one permission to go upon those grounds, for he had rented the land and everything belonged to him. We offered him all the nuts that we had gathered, saying that we had gone there innocently; but he refused the offer and again started down the road breathing out his threats.

"For some time we stood a silent, bewildered group. At length, not knowing what else to do, we all climbed upon the load and started for home.



"We noticed a man coming toward us."

It was necessary to pass the home of the enraged man, as there was no other way to go; and when we drew near his house, our fear increased. In the barnlot was the man hitching up his horse and preparing to go to town and have us arrested. We stopped our team and tried to talk to him again, offering him our load of nuts; but he again refused them, saying he would be satisfied with nothing but our arrest. Soon he was ready and driving out upon the road, and we watched him hurrying away toward the city.

"As we slowly wended our way homeward over the road that in the morning had seemed so beautiful and suggestive, everything seemed changed and gloomy; but the difference was not in the scenery, but in us. The same trees nodded and quivered in the breeze along the ridge; the flowers and grass were still crisp and brown; the same deep, lonely hollows were there, with now and then a glimpse of the winding river below them. The great sun, hazy in the autumn light, was just sinking behind the hills far in the distance. Far beneath us was the city with its shadowed streets; its shops, stores, and dwellings; its ancient relics of the long ago; its constant reminder of sin and crime. But what was awaiting us?

"As a great serpent the river glided along by our side as we left the hills. The ancient mound in silence seemed to beckon on to the massive walls beyond that in the morning had brought forth so many resolves to my heart to teach my children honesty, truth, and character. What was I that night? A law-breaker! a criminal expecting at any moment and every turn in the road to see the officers approaching to seize us!

"On, on we went, thankful at the delay of the officers and hopeful that something would result in our favor. Not until I was within the walls of my own little home with my precious children could I unload the burdens of the day; but there I received the comfort that I so much needed.

"On the following morning your father paid the owner of the land a visit. He found him very much agitated and threatening us all with the law. Even after he understood from our friend that it was through his own permission that we had gone, he tried to deny having given any one the privilege to go there, and seemed anxious to arrest us all. I think God undertook for us then, for I was at home earnestly praying that whatever was for the best would

happen. When your father returned, he said that it would be all right if we never repeated the offense, and we never did."

"Then, you didn't have to give up the nuts or go to jail, either," Benny said in a tone of satisfaction.

"No, we were allowed to keep the nuts, but we always felt that we had paid dearly for them. It taught us always to be sure about things, and not to depend on another's word in doubtful matters."

"I'm so glad you were not arrested," Nellie said stroking her mother's hand, and little Ethel, burying her face in her mother's lap, said, "O Mama! it makes me cry to think of that man in the woods."

"Perhaps you don't know what giant was torturing that poor man, Ethel, so I will tell you. It was giant Hate. For two days the man had been drinking from the poisonous waters of the fatal spring of Anger, and he was wholly unable to control himself or listen to reason."

CHAPTER XII.

HOW HENRY BECAME A KNIGHT.

THE STORY of the nutting-party made a deep impression upon Harry.

For several minutes he sat in deep thought. Then he said, "I too am glad that you were not arrested for stealing."

"Yes, my son," his mother replied, "stealing is an awful crime, and it should be classed among the giants that trouble us. It places many people behind prison-bars, and sometimes boys, and even girls, of devoted parents are among the number. I once knew a boy named Henry who might have had that fate had it not been for a little incident that happened in his life."

"Oh! Mama is going to tell us another story," Nellie said in an eager tone; and as her mother began, the little girls quickly moved their low chairs back to their accustomed places. The girls, thinking the stories were ended for the night, had been preparing for a romp before going to bed, but they gladly settled down again to listen.

"Henry," continued their mother, "lived on a large farm with his mother, brothers, and sisters. His father was dead. Henry was very young at the death of his father, and the older boys bore the responsibility of caring for the family and were looked to for advice and instruction about the work.

"There were many things on the farm to be done, and the lighter tasks were assigned to Henry, his younger brother, and a sister two years older than Henry. It was astonishing how many things there were that those three children could do. They carried the wood and the water; fed the chickens and the pigs; gathered up apples; hoed and raked in the garden; picked the berries, beans, and peas for dinner; ran errands for mother; and saved the older boys many steps by carrying water to them during the day when they were busy in the field.

"In the summer-time there were the cows to bring from the pasture to the barnlot at milking-time. Down through the narrow lane the children would scamper when the sun began to sink in the western sky, playing, singing, whistling, or shouting, with no fear of disturbing some poor nerve-wrecked creature. Butterflies, birds, and grasshoppers, frightened from among the

buttercups and clover along the way, would often fly on before them; and an occasional bumblebee, buzzing angrily above their heads, revealed the secret of a hidden nest of honey that must be attended to by and by. At the pasture-gate the cows were usually waiting, eager to return to the barn at milking-time to enjoy a season with their calves. If any loitered, Henry urged them along with a stick or a slap on the hips.

"In the barnlot the mother was usually waiting with her empty pails and stool. The pretty white streams of milk that fell into the empty buckets when the mother sat down to milk, greatly interested her children gathered around her, and each child soon learned to milk and thus greatly relieved their mother.

"At the back of the farm a dense woods extended over many acres of land. Deep within this forest the children often rambled, searching for wild flowers, thorn-apples, blackberries, nuts, or papaws. The children usually returned with well-filled baskets. Near the edge of the woods was a winding stream. Here the little folks sometimes caught on tiny hooks the small fish hiding behind the stones.

"The children spent a large part of the winter within the walls of a small country schoolhouse, learning how to read, spell, write, and count.

"Happy children! Surrounded by the beauties and treasures of nature, and blessed with a good Christian mother to look after and to supply all their needs. The family altar set up within their household by the father years before was kept; every day the family humbly bowed themselves before the Lord. In the prayers of the faithful mother the children were each day committed to God, and the family was looked upon as a model of piety and goodness. It was always represented at Sunday-school and the weekly religious services. There the children learned much about the Bible and about living a life that is upright and pleasing to the Lord.

"The older children usually drove the horse for their mother when she went to the weekly prayer-meeting; but as Henry grew and learned more about the care of horses, he went in their stead. On such occasions he at first sat contentedly by the side of his mother. When the meeting was long, his eyelids would often become heavy, and with head bent forward he would sometimes fall asleep. These experiences did not please him. It did not

seem manly to sleep in the time of meeting, and besides, some other boys made remarks about it and invited him to sit with them. And Henry wanted to oh, so much! His mother gave her permission for him to do this, provided he would remain in his seat during the entire service; and Henry promised that he would do so.

"He found it easier to keep awake among the boys, for they did much whispering; but he soon learned that each time they all arose when meeting was nicely commenced and slipped out of the chapel. Sometimes they would return just before the meeting closed. Henry began wondering what they did and wishing that he could follow them. Then it was that he met temptation face to face.

"The boys asked him to go with them, saying that he could return as they did and that his mother would know nothing of his absence. But Henry remembered his promise to his mother. He also remembered that many times she had warned him to keep his word and resist temptation. For several times he was brave enough to hold to his good resolutions; but one evening, when the service was unusually long and his eyelids so heavy that they would close in spite of his efforts to keep them open, he arose and slipped out through the open door, unnoticed by his mother.

"The late summer breeze was gently rustling the leaves of the small grove surrounding the chapel. The cool air soon awakened him, and, straightening himself, he thought he felt better. Now, in one way Henry did feel better. The drowsiness had left him, and he was wide awake. But something else was awake as well. It was his dear friend Conscience. His promise to his mother came before him. 'What would she say if she knew you were out here?' whispered Conscience. Silently he peered into the window close by. He saw that his mother's back was toward him and that she was carefully listening to the sermon. But Conscience urged, 'You had better return at once'; and very quietly Henry slipped back to his vacant seat. Conscience also suggested that he tell his mother and promise to obey her in the future; but Temptation reasoned, 'No; it is such a small thing, and you need not repeat it, if you don't wish to. Just say nothing about it.' So Henry remained quiet.

"The following week the same boys were at the meeting, and Henry having obtained the consent of his mother, was soon sitting among them. After a few whispered remarks about what had happened the previous week, the other boys slipped out. Then Temptation again assailed Henry. 'It was all right,' he whispered. 'You see, your mother knew nothing of your going outside last week, and she may not this time. You don't intend to do anything wrong, and it is dreadfully close in here.' It took much less reasoning to make Henry decide this time, as the voice of Conscience was not so plain and distinct as before. He arose and followed the boys out into the open air. His promise came before his mind again, but it was not so vivid, and it very soon faded entirely away.

"After a few such experiences Henry found that he could slip out of the door, and sometimes not even return, without his mother's suspecting that he was not in the house. He knew that he was not doing right by thus deceiving his mother, but Conscience was silent now. She had endeavored to warn him of his danger, but she could do no more, and as she watched Giant Untruth slipping the mask of Hypocrisy over Henry, she became disheartened.

"Some might think it a very small thing for Henry to do as he had done, and that he was doing no one an injury, and that it was more of a joke than anything else; but, children, it was a serious thing. Henry was laying the foundation of something that brought him much sorrow, as you will see.

"Henry's mother had perfect confidence in her son, and it was proper that she should for he meant to do right, but she should have more carefully chosen his companions. The boys who had encouraged him to disobey his mother were really bad boys. They had been allowed to have their own way until they did many bad and underhanded things; and as soon as they had a chance, they began to teach Henry things that he had never known before. You think, children, that we are very strict with you because we do not allow you the privileges that you see given to others; but when you have heard all of Henry's story you will understand why and see how dangerous it is for us not to know where you are.

"One moonlight evening while Henry was out with these boys, one of them said, 'Henry, do you like grapes?' Now, if there was one thing that

Henry liked more than anything else, it was grapes, and he did not have many at his own home that year; so, of course, he answered yes. That was enough. He was soon informed where some could be gotten very easily, and told that if he would go he could get all that he wanted to eat. Henry was delighted at the thought of getting some of the fruit for which he had been longing, so he said at once that he would go, and he was soon on his way with one of the boys.

"For about half a mile the boys hurried on, and then they halted in the shadow of a barn. 'Now, we must be very quiet and go slowly toward the vineyard,' his companion whispered. Henry started; were the grapes to be stolen? Suddenly he became afraid. As the feeling of fear crept over him, he for the first time realized that they were to steal the grapes.

"Many things flitted through Henry's mind in the next few minutes—his mother, his vacant seat in the chapel, his promise to remain there during the service, the teaching that he had received concerning stealing, the penalties awaiting the thief. But then he thought: 'I have been away from meeting a good many times and mother has never found it out. Might I not take some of the grapes without her knowledge? I do want some of them dreadfully; still, I know it would be wrong to take them.'

"While these thoughts were passing through his mind, the other boy was busy planning a way to get to the vineyard without detection. No thoughts were troubling him. Conscience had long since been cruelly silenced. Wounded and abused, that devoted friend had given up in despair, and the boy was plunging deeper into sin every day. There was no time to lose now if they reached the chapel before the meeting closed. 'Follow me, Henry,' was all he said, and without knowing what else to do Henry obeyed.

"Cautiously they slipped from the shadow of the barn to crawl along in the shelter of the fence. As stealthily as a cat moving upon its prey, they made their way along until they reached the end of the vineyard. Once among the vines, they felt secure.

"Just as Henry was reaching for a large bunch of grapes, his fingers being in the very act of encircling the cluster, the vines were parted by the wind, and the great round moon was revealed in all its brightness. Henry shuddered

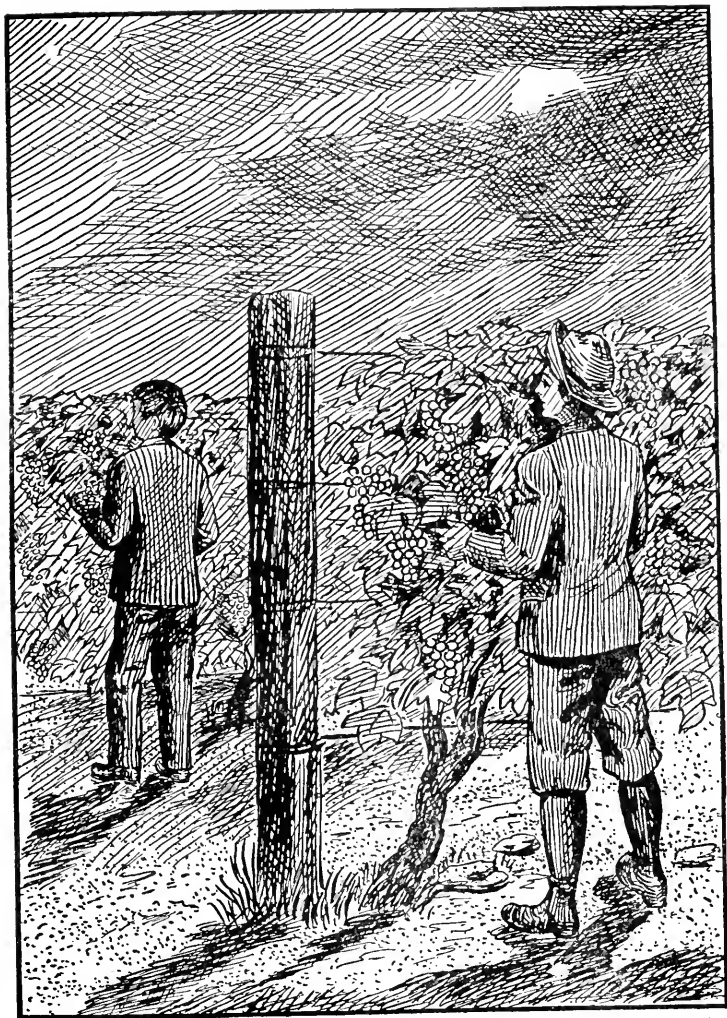
and instantly withdrew his hand. As a great face it appeared to him there. He saw his companion hastily plucking the grapes from another row. How like a thief he appeared! Just like the pictures that he had seen!

"But, renewing his courage, Henry once more clutched the bunch and pulled it from the vine. Instantly he heard Conscience whisper, 'Now you are a thief!' Again remembering there was no time to be lost and once more turning a deaf ear to his tender friend, he hastily began to fill his hat as the other boy was doing.

"When they had filled their hats, they withdrew as silently as they had entered and in the same direction that they had come. When they were safely back in the road again, Henry heard his companion saying, 'Well, we didn't get caught, so let us eat our grapes.' Now, the grapes were of a very fine variety, but they did not taste so good as Henry had expected. An awful feeling of guilt was tugging at his heart, and as the two boys came in sight of the chapel, Henry wished that he had not left his seat that night. As he drove home beside his mother, he had little to say. His heart seemed, oh! so heavy.

"Before climbing the stairs leading to his bedroom, he looked at the clock. It seemed to be ticking louder than common; or was it his heart? As he stood there these words sounded loud and clear: 'A thief! A thief! you are a thief!' What was it! Who had spoken those dreadful words? He looked about him; no one was near, but the words were still distinct. With a bound he ran up the stairway, hastily undressed, and without kneeling at his bedside as was his habit, crept in under the covers. He closed his eyes and longed for sleep, but he only seemed to become more perfectly awake. When at last his thoughts became dreamy, he seemed to see boys sneaking into vineyards, houses, and barns; and restlessly he turned from one side of the bed to the other. He was having a taste of the wretchedness of guilt and sin.

"Now we must leave Henry until tomorrow evening, when I shall try to finish the story."



"How like a thief he appeared!"

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW HENRY BECAME A KNIGHT—Continued.

“**M**ORNING came. Henry felt better. The cool air of the smaller hours of the night had quite refreshed him. He arose and, slipping into his work-clothes, began making plans for the day, which he knew was to be spent in the field.

“He sometimes thought of the evening’s adventure, but tried to forget that he had done anything wrong. He endeavored to think that taking the grapes was only a funny joke and that no harm was really meant. And he soon began to long for the next Wednesday evening to come so that he might again be with the boys, and a desire to be more at ease among them entered his heart. There seemed to be a fascination about their companionship.

“Wednesday evening at last came. When meeting was well commenced, the boys went out as usual. Henry accompanied them. Remarks were made about the previous week’s experience, and there was an occasional laugh or jest about Henry’s cleverness. The jokes at first made Henry wince, but he soon joined in and laughed with the rest. Henry’s mother in the meeting was all unmindful of her son’s danger and temptations. Poor Henry! Thoughtless mother!

“Night after night he continued to meet with them and listen to their accounts of stealing watermelons, peaches, and other things from the neighboring farms and gardens. He listened until this kind of stealing seemed but a light thing and a nice pastime.

“Once as the boys were relating some of their adventures, one of them proposed a ride in one of the rigs that were standing near the chapel and ended by suggesting the one in which Henry had brought his mother to meeting. After a moment’s hesitation Henry agreed, and the group were soon driving away toward the little country store, where they said they could buy some candy and nuts. As they rode along, one of them related how he had sometimes taken little articles from the counter while he was being waited upon, and the other boys laughed, calling him brave and clever.

“As they came in sight of the store, this brave (?) boy, who seemed to

be the leader of the gang, said, 'Now, boys, while I buy the candy and nuts, you be looking around and pick up whatever you can find.' Ah! this was a new kind of stealing for Henry! He shrank from taking anything from a store. The thought seemed to chill him, but he did not want to appear cowardly after having gone this far, so with the rest he agreed to take what he could.

"The store in daylight would have appeared a wretched building. Long untouched by the painter's brush, it bore the traces of poverty and age. Inside it was little better. The low, dingy walls, the strong smell of tobacco-smoke, the fly-specked packages on dusty shelves and counter, the partly filled barrels and boxes where flies were still hovering, the rusty stove, and the filth left upon the floor by loafers—all made it an uninviting place. Henry's mother did her trading in the city, and now as her boy looked in through the open door, he wondered how he could ever eat candy bought in such a place as that!

"In the farthest corner a little old gray-haired man was sitting with a cloud of tobacco-smoke curling above his head. As the boys entered, he arose and, stepping behind the counter, asked them what they wanted. He was out of nuts, but had some candy. As he turned to lift the corner of a glass dish and to slip the candy into a sack, the boys improved the time, and when, a few minutes later, they left the building, they each concealed something taken from the old man's store. Henry had some lemons, and as the boys compared their stolen articles in the dim light, Conscience once more ventured to whisper, 'Now you are a thief indeed, for you have helped to rob a store.' She was soon silenced, however, and Henry began wondering what he could do with the lemons when he took them home.

"All the way back to the chapel his mind was busy trying to find a way out of his difficulty, and he had little to say to the boys. Temptation suggested a lie. He thought of telling his mother that a friend had made him a present of the lemons, but he realized as quickly that he could not do that, for lemons were not usually given away as presents. At last he decided to hide them in the barn until he could think of a way to use them.

"As the boys drove into the grove, they saw to their surprise that the meeting was just being dismissed. The darkness sheltered them, however; and as Henry's mother was busily engaged in talking to friends, he once more

managed to deceive his unsuspecting parent. In silence, as upon that other night, he and his mother a little later drove home from the meeting. After the horse was safe in the stall, it was an easy matter to hide the lemons away in the haymow.

"Conscience did not trouble Henry much during the night, but what was it, when his mother began reading in family worship the next morning, that made the third verse sound so plain and distinct? '*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*' As Henry heard the words, he saw in imagination the vines parting in the vineyard to let the great face of the moon look upon him. He shivered, but he was not cold. With a desperate struggle he shut out the sight and sound, and as the family knelt in prayer, he began making plans about his work.

"Henry was now large enough to plow, and he was often sent with the team to the field to prepare the soil for the fall planting. He enjoyed this kind of work, for he liked to use the steady horses, which had long been in the family and which were great pets."

Here Mrs. H. paused a moment, and Nellie asked:

"Mama, do you know the horses' names and their color?"

"Yes, my dear," her mother answered, "I do. One of them, old Bird, was a dark chestnut color. She was the greater pet of the two. The other, a large Norman gray, had your name. Nellie was a powerful animal. Both were good and true. Many times Henry had been warned to be careful with them, and he had often been told never to leave them alone long at a time.

"Henry's work the morning after the visit to the country store was to plow in a large field. All the forenoon he worked. Up one side of the field he went, then across, back, across again and up the side where the first furrow had been turned, until the field assumed the appearance of a troubled sea. The horses and the plow took most of his time and thought, but now and then his mind would go back to the boys, the store, and the lemons. He was still puzzled as to what to do with the lemons. They were too sour to be eaten as they were, and to ask his mother for sugar to eat with them might lead to a forced confession of his crime.

"At noon he was still wondering where he could get some sugar. To take the sugar from his home would not be the same as taking it or the lemons from the store, he reasoned. 'I have a right to what I want to eat,' he said to himself. Now, Henry knew that in this he was not deceiving himself. He knew that he was welcome to all he wished to eat, the coveted sugar included. But it was his duty to ask his mother for it. Having started him on the downward road, Satan was hurrying him onward at a rapid gait.

"Henry ate his dinner hurriedly and silently. He paid little heed to the good food before him, so eager was he to secure some of the sugar to take with him to the field. When he arose, he had made up his mind to watch for a chance to do as he had done at the little country store—take some sugar when no one was looking. Shortly before returning to the field he passed through the kitchen. Every one happened to be out; so, seizing a paper sack, he hastily poured in the sugar, and he was soon out in the barn placing the lemons on top of it in the sack. Then he hastened back again beside the horses.

"What made Henry's hand tremble as he stroked the slick sides of old Bird? What made him glance up quickly and clutch the paper bag in his other hand? No one was entering the door. It was only Nellie stamping her foot to frighten a fly. No one had witnessed his taking the sugar. Ah, had no one been in the kitchen? Had no eye been looking when he took the sack and helped himself to the sugar? Had no one known when he slipped the lemons from the counter of the old man's store or the grapes from the vineyard? Had all this been unnoticed? Again Henry seemed to see the vines blowing aside to reveal the great round moon and seemed to hear his mother reading the words, *'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.'* Henry was in a close place, but as before he strove with his better feelings and turned away from Conscience.

"He soon had the horses bridled, and then drove them to the well for a drink. While they stood there before the long watering-trough with their noses buried in the cool water, switching their tails and stamping their feet at the hungry flies, Henry was busy filling a small pail with water to take with him to drink in the field.

"When the thirsty animals were satisfied, Henry, holding his water-pail

and sack of lemons in one hand and the lines in the other, started down the narrow lane. It was the same lane through which he used to drive the cows with his little brother and sister; where the butterflies, birds, and grasshoppers flew aside as the children passed; where they gaily ran, singing, shouting, whistling, or playing, just as they happened to feel inclined. But it was different with Henry today. His heart was no longer happy and free. He was in the same lane, but nature had lost her best charms for him. He did not heed the butterflies now. He was thinking of the lemons, the little old storekeeper, the boys, his mother, and now and then of the words that she had read in the morning worship about the Lord's beholding every thing, the evil as well as the good.

"Once again in the field he set the pail of water in the shade of the fence and the bag containing the lemons and the sugar beside it, and then hitched the horses to the plow and began his afternoon's work. Furrow after furrow of the rich soil was turned, making the space in the center smaller and smaller; but the day was hot and sultry, and the heat was telling upon the horses. After two long hours Henry, seeing that his horses must have rest, drove them to the shelter of a large tree. Leaving them there, he slipped over to the fence for a drink of water.

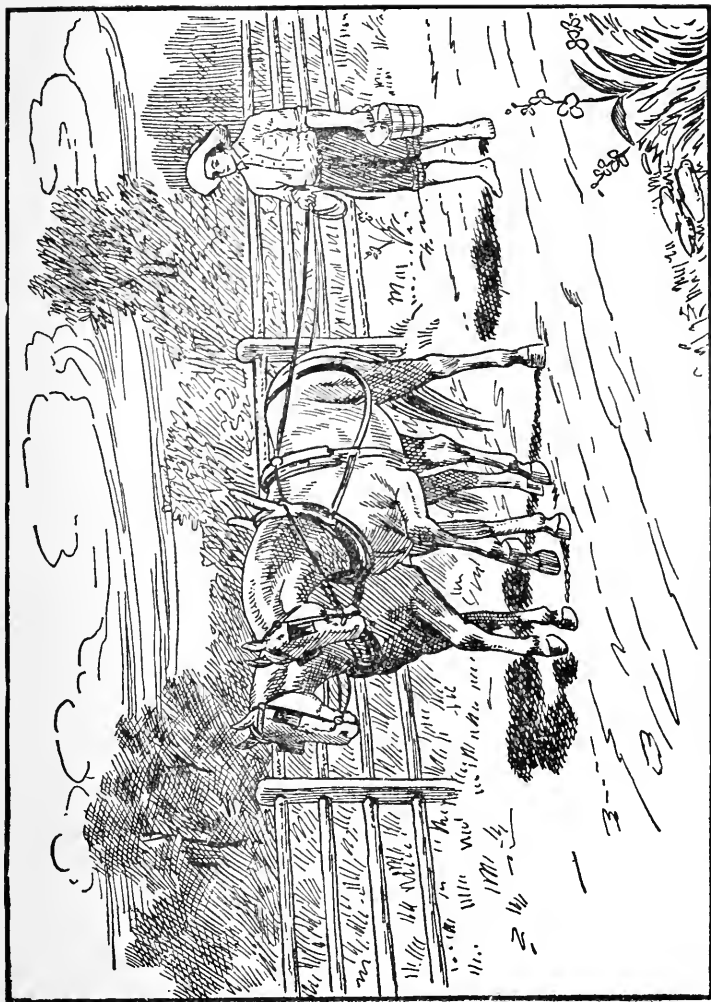
"Now, to do Henry justice, I must tell you that he did not mean to leave the horses alone longer than it would take him to get a hurried drink from the pail. So interested had he been in his work that he had forgotten about the lemons and the sugar. But as he drew near the fence and saw the sack sitting beside the pail, he sprang forward and was soon squeezing the juice of the lemons into the water and stirring in the sugar with a stick cut from the fence. He was just lifting the pail to his lips, which were dry and parched, when a sound reached his ears. Glancing quickly behind him, he saw whence it came. Old Bird, annoyed by the flies and the heat, had caught her foot in the lines and was being pulled backward over the plow.

"Dropping the pail of lemonade and springing to his feet, Henry started toward the horses. But before he reached them, they had circled round the plow and were back upon it again. He made a desperate effort to catch them by the bridle, but failed. He saw Bird rear and fall backward upon the



PAUL'S SHIPWRECK





"It was the same lane through which he used to drive the cows,"

ground and Nellie stumble and fall upon her. Then he saw them struggling to free themselves from the straps that bound them and the blade of the plow drawn into Bird's back.

"Powerless to do anything to help the poor animals, he stood horrified at the sight. Though he was aware that no one was near enough to hear him, yet he cried loudly for help. Again and again he shouted. At length he realized that he must do something himself, and he again ran toward the fallen horses.

"Suddenly the strong muscles relaxed and became quiet, and the great bodies of the horses were limp and motionless before him. Without a moment's delay Henry began unbuckling and cutting the straps that held them fast, and then with a mighty effort he pulled the plow-point from Bird's back. As Henry stepped away from the horses, he thought he should soon see Bird in her death-struggle; but, to his surprise, she rose to her feet and with the harness dangling about her started by the side of her companion for the barn.

"Trembling and weakened from fright and exertion, Henry followed after them. As he passed the fence, his eyes caught sight of the pail of lemonade. There it sat, untouched and with the empty sack and the lemon-rinds beside it. Like a flash of lightning the whole situation came before him—the stealing of the lemons the night before, the hiding of them in the barn, the taking of the sugar, the making of the lemonade, and the awful accident of the horses. As the panorama passed before him, he saw his guilt; then, with an awful feeling of shame and dread settling over him, he seized the pail and emptied its contents upon the ground without having tasted a drop. All desire for the beverage had gone, and oh, how he wished that he had not gone to the little store with the boys!

"As he moved slowly along behind the crippled horses, battling with his feelings, he was spied by his mother from the house. From the appearance of the horses she could see that something dreadful had happened, and, hurrying down the lane, she was soon listening to his explanation.

"In his heart Henry longed to tell his mother all. He longed to tell her of his conduct from the first time that he had disobeyed and deceived her by

leaving the meeting. But he told her only of the accident in the field, and that in as few words as possible. He left out entirely the part about the lemonade.

"Bird was taken to the barn and given the best of care. Nobody thought that she could possibly get well, but after six weeks of careful nursing she was again led forth from the stall. In caring for the poor animal that was suffering on account of his carelessness and wrong-doing, Henry was faithful, and during frequent visits to the stall he was ever reminded of his temptation and sin. He longed to be free from guilt as he had been before he yielded to temptation, and to become a true soldier of the cross.

"Henry continued to take his mother to meeting and to sit with the same boys that had led him into temptation, but their invitations to do wrong no longer tempted him. Within his bosom there was now a craving for a pure, clean heart, a deep longing to live a better life, a great desire to be an honor, and not a disgrace, to his family. His neglect of his mother's tender and oft-repeated admonitions was hideous to him now, and he could see that he had commenced step by step to leave the path of right and duty.

"In fancy he looked ahead into the future and imagined what his life would be if he did not change his ways, and he thought of what intense sorrow his actions would bring to his beloved mother. He thought also of the effect that his actions would soon have upon his younger brother, and of how he would thus double his mother's shame and sorrow. By the help of God he would change his course in life. He would become a Christian. He would spend the rest of his days in God's service.

"The sermons helped to deepen his conviction, and one evening when the minister related an incident of a young man who, like himself, had been reared by Christian parents, but who through evil associations was led step by step from one sin to another until he became possessed with evil spirits and was unable to turn from his evil ways, Henry became deeply moved.

"Many times," said the preacher, "the young man made resolutions to do better, only to break them and sink deeper in sin. Night after night he listened to the sermons from the pulpit, and sometimes visions of the Savior rose before his eyes and he heard him saying, "Come!" But all of these invitations he slighted, until he no longer heard the thrilling word. One night this young

man left the meeting-house to go to his home; but before he had gone far, the death-angel called him, and he was ushered into eternity.'

"Henry heard the story with a fast-beating heart, and when a little later an invitation was given to those who wished to give their hearts to God, he arose and went forward.

"Falling upon his knees, he cried to the One who alone could understand the awful weight of his sorrow and send him relief. And there in that humble attitude he learned the Christian's beautiful secret, and the black stains were washed from his heart. And Henry learned something else. He learned that he must ask forgiveness not only from God, but also from any whom he had wronged. So, of course, he had a duty to perform. This he promised to do at his earliest opportunity. As he took his seat beside his mother that evening to drive home from meeting, the great burden of guilt was gone. It had been lifted from his troubled soul, and he no longer needed the darkness to hide his guilty face.

"In the weeks that followed, Henry made restitution for his wicked deeds that had so nearly wrecked his young life, and in later years he was able to be a help to others and an honor to his dear mother. Oh, how her heart rejoiced when she realized what her child had been rescued from, and she never grew weary in warning other mothers to be careful in choosing the companions of their children."

The story made the children think of the brave knight of whom they had been reading. Henry was now indeed a knight. In becoming a Christian he had put on the armor of righteousness and was starting out in the service of his King. His conflicts were fierce in the land of giants, but many were slain by his wonderful sword.

"But what became of the other boys?" Harry asked as his mother concluded her story.

"They went from bad to worse, Harry," his mother replied. "The boy that encouraged Henry to steal the grapes went deep into sin. The last I heard of him he was serving a long term in the penitentiary. Some of the boys were imprisoned for stealing, and the rest moved away.

"Henry's mother always rejoiced that her child had been saved from the

clutches of the enemy and from the fierce giants that were maturing in his nature. He had many a hard battle even after he became a knight, but, clad in the armor of righteousness and with his noble friend Conscience beside him, he was able to conquer. He was never sorry that he turned from his evil ways, and the words of the proverb that his mother read in the morning worship were many times a comfort to him: *'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.'*”



CHAPTER XIV.

A SCENE IN THE COURT-ROOM.

THE DAY had been a stormy one, and a furious gale was still blowing on the outside of the home of Mr. and Mrs. H.; but in the library, where the family were gathered, it was warm and bright. The fire in the grate burned brightly and sent its ruddy glow and pleasant warmth through the room, and only as they heard the moaning of the wind did they realize the strength of the storm.

"I am glad we have a home tonight," Mrs. H. remarked after a short silence. "I am glad that we do not have to spend this night in open air, and she drew her chair closer to the fire.

"I too am glad," her husband added. "I am glad that none of us have to spend this night where some persons whom I met today will spend it."

"Who were they and where were they, Papa?" Nellie asked eagerly. "Was it anyone that you knew?"

"No, Nellie; it was no one that I knew; but oh! the wretchedness of the scene haunts me still," her father said with a shudder. "It was a group of prisoners on their way to jail."

All the children were now looking at their father through terrified eyes. The doors of prisons were becoming anything but inviting to them now. They had been introduced to some of the evil effects of crime and had come to understand that its penalties are severe both in this life and in the world to come. Still, the children were anxious to hear their father's story, and in response to their eager requests he began:

"Before I started today on my regular trip to the bank, I felt that I had much rather remain in my warm office, but it was necessary that I go; so I started out through the wind and sleet, and I wished the distance had not been half so far. I saw a few other persons hurrying along to their places of business, but none were out for pleasure.

"As I passed along the pavement in front of the court-house square, I noticed a group of people coming toward me, and I at once became interested

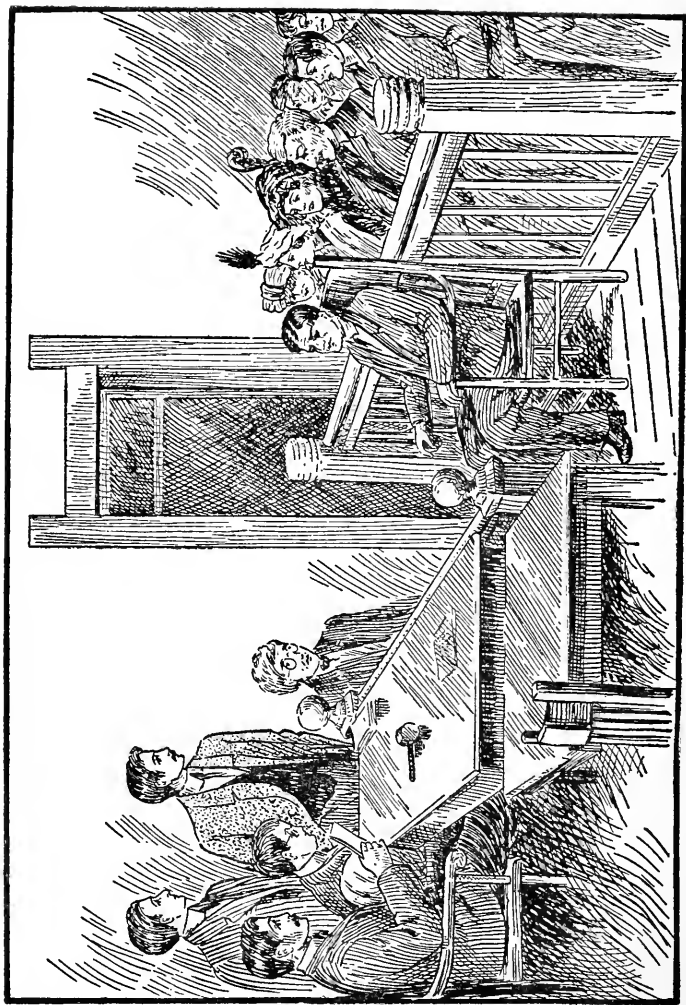
and wished to know what could bring them out upon such a disagreeable day. Noticing the direction that they were taking, I knew that we should meet at the corner just a block ahead if I slackened my speed, and as I was becoming more curious every moment, I walked slowly, and this is what I saw: Two burly policemen with stars shining upon their coat lapels, three women, and several men of different ages. Then the fact dawned upon my mind that they were some prisoners being taken from the jail to police headquarters.

"As I followed them down the street, I soon saw them enter the building, as I suspected they would, and instantly a great desire to visit that place came over me. I had never attended police court, and although business matters were very pressing, I decided to go and follow them inside.

"Passing through the main office, where several clerks were at work, we entered a small room that was lighted only by a skylight and ventilated from two transoms that opened into adjoining rooms. Blue clouds of tobacco-smoke were curling upward from several cigars, increasing the foul odor of the room and adding to its tragical appearance. The Judge was sitting behind his large desk upon a platform, and other officers soon gathered near him. In front of the Judge was an open court, and here a vacant chair was awaiting its ill-fated occupant. The prisoners were seated behind the paling of the court.

"I took my seat to one side of the room and began to study the faces before me. A multitude of things were suggested to my mind. I wondered what offense could have brought the different prisoners there. It was therefore with intense interest that I waited for the Judge to give the signal to begin court. I continued to study the prisoners' faces one by one and discovered the mark of various sins and habits and guessed what some of them were.

"At last there was a sudden hush. An officer then read a name from a paper that he held, and the Judge found that he had a record of it on his book and asked if such a person was present. Very slowly a man rose from the group in front of me, and in answer to the charge he said that he was guilty. His confession, however, was not wholly necessary, for his face, by its blackened eye, swollen jaw, and blotted appearance told plainly of a drunken struggle. He took the vacant chair in the court and told how the night before in company with another man, he had visited a certain saloon in the outskirts



"I continued to study the prisoners' faces"

of the city. There liquor was ordered and freely drunk, and the poisonous alcohol soon began its work within their systems.

"The effect of alcohol upon the human system, children, is terrible. It not only robs its victim of his will-power and self-control, but makes him selfish, deceitful, and sometimes very cruel. It makes him do and say many things that are shameful indeed, and he places himself on a level with the animals about him when he partakes of it. It is so strong that when it enters his stomach it gradually dries up the juices that God has placed there to digest the food, and causes ulcers, or large sores, to appear. These cause such a burning, smarting sensation that he longs for something to stop the irritation. More strong alcohol will do this for a short time; but when its numbing effect is over, the burning and smarting is worse than ever, and in time he is like a madman if deprived of it at all.

"But I must return to my story. The liquor those two men drank that night, did not create within them a feeling of brotherly love. Sometime before that a little trouble had arisen between them. The trouble had not amounted to much before; but as they continued drinking, it was mentioned by some other men who, like themselves, were wasting their time and money. With the powerful, burning liquor influencing their brains, the trouble appeared much greater than it had ever appeared before; in fact, it was magnified a hundred-fold. So some sharp words were exchanged; cursing followed; and then, urged on by their companions, the two quickly decided to go out into the street and settle their trouble by fighting. Out they went with the cheering crowd behind them. Blow after blow was struck; and just as both men fell in their terrible struggle, a policeman rushed up and after separating them led them both to jail.

"The next man that arose in answer to the name called stated that the story was all true and that he was the other man. Their punishment was either to pay a fine or else to serve a sentence in jail, and I think they were taken back to jail.

"Again there was silence in the court-room, and then another name was read. This time a man about fifty years of age arose. He was charged with intoxication and pleaded guilty. His story was that a few months before he

had come to the city to work at his trade. He was a tinner, and work of that nature being plentiful, he was doing nicely in his business; but the awful temptation that the saloon presented was more than he could resist. In the unguarded moment he yielded, and his arrest was the result. As it was his first offense and he vowed that it would be his last, the Judge allowed him to go with a light fine.

"As the man left the room, I wondered which one would be next. I did not have long to wait.

"In answer to the next name that was read a young man arose. His high forehead and his once noble countenance told that he had come from a good family; but sin was already marring his features and marking his brow. The temptation had been placed before him, and, like thousands before him, he had yielded. The charge against him was intoxication, and as he said the word "Guilty," his head was bowed in shame. Not having sufficient money to pay his fine, an officer led him from the room and took him back to jail.

"The number of prisoners in front was growing smaller. The next one called was a young man yet in his teens. It was probably the first time that he had ever appeared in court. A few weeks before, he said, he came to the city and commenced taking orders for enlarged pictures. Meeting with success in his work, he continued it, going about from house to house.

"After taking an order for a picture one afternoon in a certain house, he discovered that he was in a place of vice. As he had never before been in such a place, he was startled; but the woman that had given him the order for the picture talked so fluently that he soon felt at home. The woman, who was somewhat older than he, ordered some drinks, and he was soon carried along into this whirlpool of sin.

"The night before he was taken to jail he paid another visit to this same house. Ah! how soon the clutches of sin take hold of the young! Having once yielded, he was easily drawn forward with the current. He met the same girl and also another; and when drinks were ordered, an elderly lady joined them and freely partook of the liquor. The entire evening was spent in revelry and vice.

"After the young man took his departure, he was horrified to find that

all of his money was gone. Not a single penny remained. His situation was critical. He was in a strange city with neither friends nor money. Not knowing what else to do, he sought a policeman and told him his wretched story. Officers went at once to the house and arrested the inmates; and, to my surprise, I found that the three women in the group before me were the ones arrested.

"As each of the girls was called before the Judge she acknowledged her life of shame. When the elderly woman was called forward and asked question after question, I could scarcely believe my ears as her answers came. She was the mother of those two girls and had trained them up to this life of sin. 'Can such a woman be called a mother?' I asked myself. Those poor girls were to be pitied rather than blamed, and encouraged to lead a better life.

"Looking at my watch, I noticed that the afternoon was slipping away. As I arose to go, I heard the Judge tell the younger girl that her offense would call for a term in the woman's prison. I did not wait to hear the sentence of the others.

"When I stepped out once more upon the street, I was glad to be there, even in the storm that had made me draw back a short time before. I thought of the many thousands that are forced to remain in a foul and unwholesome atmosphere day after day just because they have not been slaying the cruel giants in their natures, but have allowed them to mature and drive them about as they will.

"I thought, too, of my boys and of the temptations they will have to meet from time to time, and my mind again went back to the faces of those prisoners. Perhaps two of the men had good fathers and mothers, but to what had these men fallen? Would they ever be able to live down their disgrace? Boys, never yield the first time. It is the first sin that lays the foundation for others and that gives the young giants material to feed upon.

"And I hope that my dear little girls will be taught while they are still young what it is to live a good and noble life, and be an emblem of heaven's purity."

CHAPTER XV.

HOW TO MAKE A HAPPY HOME.

WHEN Mr. H. finished his story, there were tears in the eyes of his wife, and she said in a deep moved voice:

"O my children! how thankful I am that none of you were in the group that your papa saw today! Surely you have much for which to be thankful!

"It is not enough to have a comfortable home to shield you from the storms of life. Only today I heard of a boy who became dissatisfied with his home surroundings and went off without his parents knowledge or permission to view the world for himself. He was scarcely past fifteen, and he had been brought up in a home of plenty. It was the same old story: he failed to confide in his parents and allowed the giants in his nature to become strong and bold.

"The fault was no doubt partly his own, but I am sure his parents were largely to blame. They wanted him to become an ideal man and lavished upon him every thing that they could afford; but they failed to look after his character by inquiring into his plans and amusements and helping him to choose his companions. His life outside the walls of the home was a blank to his parents and they did not realize his danger until it was too late. How different it might have been had they taken the proper course! Instead of giving him his freedom when he was too young to understand himself or others, they should have studied his nature and kept his interests with them at home. A short season spent with him each evening would not have been missed, and during that time they could have found out what kind of work and amusements he enjoyed the most.

"Do you remember, boys, how a few years ago we encouraged you to improve your talents, instead of allowing you to run around with other boys in the evenings? Do you remember how hard it seemed when the other boys came for you to go with them to various places of amusements and we said no? We did it for your good. We knew that it would seem hard to you at the time, and it was a real sacrifice to us; but we looked ahead to what it would mean to us all if you formed the habit of wasting your moments in sinful

pleasures. We wanted you to have a purpose in life and a desire to be self-sacrificing; and there was no better way, we reasoned, than to set you an example and aid you in following it. Are you sorry now that we have taken this course with you?"

There was a short silence, and then Harry said:

"I am sure it has been for our good. It did seem hard, though, at the time; but I am glad that we have learned how to spend our evenings profitably at home. I have been watching the boys of late that spend their time in running around. It is affecting their grades in school, and they have nothing else to show for the time they have lost. I'll tell you what Benny and I have been planning. We want to earn money enough to pay our own way through college if we can. You know we have a bank-account already, and if we continue to save our money and earn what we can in different ways, we can add quite a little to it."

"That is a grand idea, boys, and I'm sure you will never be sorry," said his mother. "Of course, it will be all right for you to get a good education, but you must never lose sight of the fact that the Lord will have some special work for you to do when you become men. He will expect you to improve yourselves with this object in view. Then when he sends you forth as knights and shows you the crown that is awaiting you, you not only will be brave for battle, but will be carefully trained and fitted for the place that he would have you fill.

"And," continued Mrs. H. turning to the girls, "our responsibility does not end with the boys. We have a duty toward our little girls. You too must learn obedience. You do not have to slay Pleasure because she has been so often the servant of Giant Selfishness. If you are careful to obey the advice that we give, you may take her for your daily companion, as did the brave knight in the story-book.

"How my heart aches for those poor girls that your papa told us of to-night! Sin and vice was taught them from their earliest remembrance, and that by their own mother. Without warning and with awful temptations thrown before them within their own home, or the place they called home, they were wholly unprepared to meet the dangers besetting true womanhood,

Their only fear was of getting in the power of the law and of having their evil deeds found out. They knew what it was to deceive other people, but they did not know what deceit meant to them.

"Girls, some day I want to whisper some sweet truths to you. I want to tell you why God has placed you here and how you will some time be mothers yourselves and have little boys and girls of your own to teach the way of purity and happiness. You can do this only as you live pure lives yourselves. Don't be afraid of playing mother now with your dollies and with children that are younger than you; but always try to be a good example before those children in every way, and when you see them doing what you think is wrong be brave enough to tell them to stop it. In this way you will not only make our own home happier, but build character and lay a good, strong foundation for your own home in the future.

"God wants the home to be a dressing-place for heaven and to be furnished with the emblems of his love, unity, purity, and sympathy. Where these things abound, the inmates will be happy."

WHERE HOME IS.

Home is not the costly mansion,
Nor the humble, lowly cot;
But, perchance, if there 'tis nestling,
Dear one, pray, disturb it not!

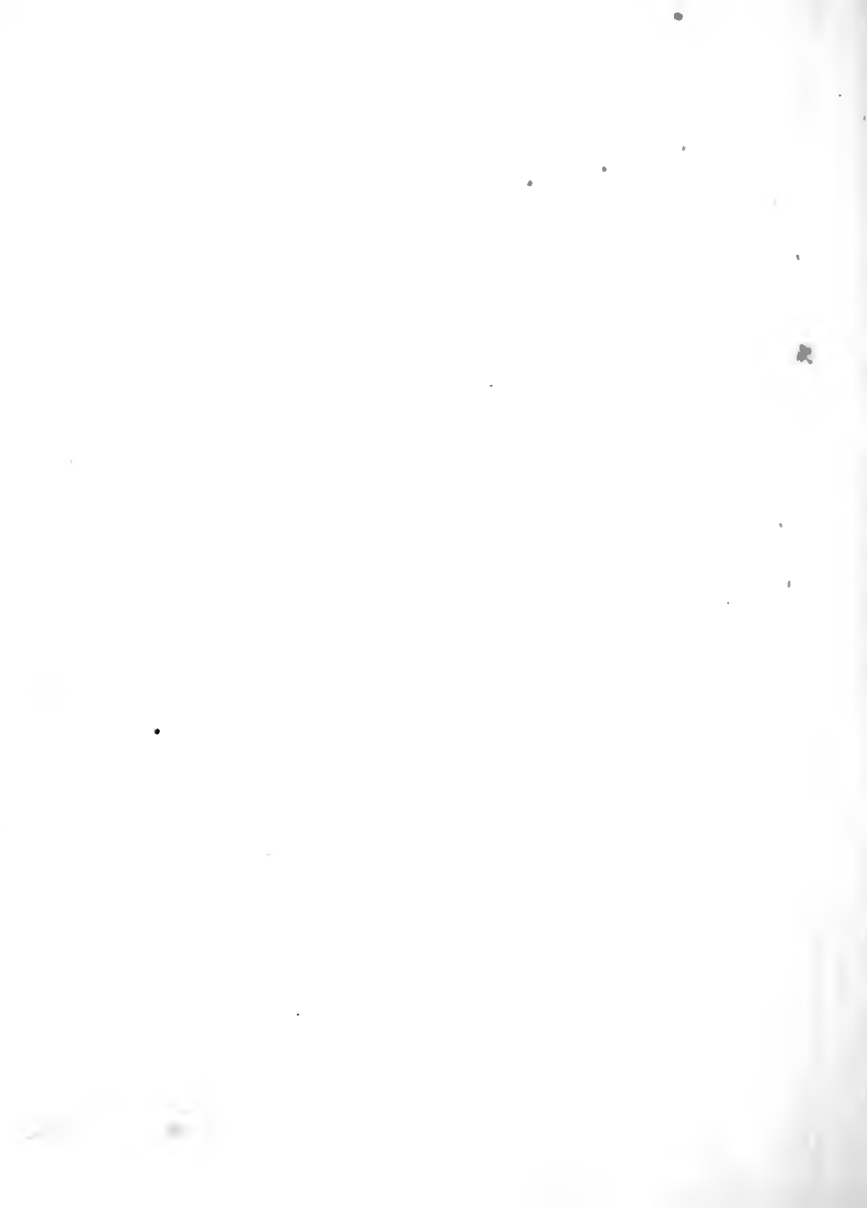
Home is where the sweet, bright angel
Of affection dwells and reigns,
Where her healing balm is ever
Soothing hearts, dismissing pains.

Home is where the shrine is builded
For the hearts that linger there,
Where the souls are bound more closely
As they bow in fervent prayer.

Home is where the inmates conquer
Giant habits one by one,
Where the youngest is considered,
And where malice is unknown.

Home is where there is awaiting
Welcome for the humblest guest,
Where the weary are protected,
Where we always find sweet rest.

Home, O home! within thy borders,
'Neath thy hallowed sheltered bowers,
Gather to thee lonely children;
Grant them bliss and happy hours.







Happy Hours at Home
Isabel Byrum C

